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FROM

WATERLOO TO THE PENINSULA.

VOL. I.

FROM

WATERLOO TO THE PENINSULA.

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FOUR MONTHS' HARD LABOUR IN BELGIUM, HOLLAND, GERMANY, AND SPAIN.

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BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA,

AUTHOR OF

"MY DIARY IN AMERICA IN THE MIDST OF WAR," ETC. ETC.

. . . . . Si tibi vera videtur
Dede manus; et si falsa est, accingere contra.—LUCRETIUS.

RY-E-27

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

IF a man desire to become proficient in the art of Ingeniously Apologizing—and there are a good many prizes in this world's tombola which may be won by the dexterous and persistent use of apology—he had best devote his time to the composition of prefaces. Very rarely indeed is a preface written without its author feeling bound to apologize for something or another. Now the excuse is elaborate; now it is abject. Sometimes the writer begs pardon all round; again he deprecates the ire of only one particular critic, or seeks to explain away his shortcomings in one particular respect. But he must cry *peccavi!* that is certain. Augustus may die with an invite on his lips for the audience to applaud the performance; but Horace must begin with a deprecatory invocation. The proper attitude for a writer on the threshold of his book is that so accurately described by Beau-

marchais in the preface to the "Barber of Seville." His apparel must be mean, his back bent, his head cast down, his knees hinged, his hands submissively folded before him. Then, with bated breath—if he wishes to go to a second edition—he must say that he is very sorry for what he has done; he must promise amendment for the next time; if he have any friends, he must style them "too partial;" if he have any enemies, he must strive to conciliate them by adroit flattery; if he have a patron, or hope to have one, he must tell him, without sticking at the clumsiness of the compliment, that he is good, and great, and beautiful; that he is an ornament to his sex, and a descendant of the Kings of Latium. There is no other way. I speak from experience. I have written twenty prefaces to books of mine own, and many more to books by other people. I have tried the preface argumentative, the preface self-asserting, the preface historical and critical, the preface circumlocutory, the preface sardonic, the preface contemptuous, and the preface indignant. Saddened, and I hope made wise, by many rebuffs, I have come to the conclusion that to achieve prefatory success the exemplar followed must not be Johnson, or Addison, or Steele—not Victor Hugo, whose introduction to *Les Orientales* is one of the finest

exordia in any language—not even glorious John Dryden, whose prose prefaces, written at the market price of two pounds ten apiece, served to save many a worthless work from annihilation—but Uriah Heep. We must be 'Umble. We must cringe. Let, then, the humbles of a deer be brought forth, and make a pie thereof, and I will eat it. Shake out the sackcloth and lay down the ashes, and I will grovel therein. I have a passion for tar, and was always fond of feathers. The name appended to this work is, I may hint, but a pseudonym. My real name is Mawworm, and I like to be despised.

I must own that I am somewhat puzzled to tell with precision what I should apologize for in the present instance. There is, however, in the Romish church a wholesale form of letting the cat out of the bag, called General Confession; and the public, perhaps, will be satisfied if I make a universal apology. I apologize for all. I retract everything. I am sorry that there are so many pages in this book, and I grieve, from the bottom of my heart, that there are not more. I confess that having "done" the field of Waterloo, I ought also to have attempted Jemappes and Fleurus. I am aware of having wholly neglected Oudenarde, and scandalously given Malplaquet the go-by. The omission of any

mention of the Dettingen *Te Deum*, or—while I was about it—of the Battle of Prague, is inexcusable. I beg leave to add that the journey of which a very feeble reflex is offered in these pages was, when originally planned, of a very different description from that which, in the end, it turned out to be. I never dreamt of going to Spain. I never had an idea of leaving Spain for a full month after I was suddenly called upon to go to Vienna, and thence to Venetia, and thence to the Tyrol, and thence to Switzerland, and thence—I scarcely know where. I intended to revisit Russia; I intended so settle down for three months in Constantinople; I intended to skim the Dalmatic coast, and look in at the Ionian Islands. My *feuille de route* was drawn up when Europe was at peace. It was, necessarily, torn into fragments when Europe went to war; and I was carried hither and thither as the war whirlwind chose. I hoped to write this preface in Bloomsbury, and I am writing it in Venice; and I shall not reside in Bloomsbury, I conjecture, any more. "What next?" asked Mr. Richard Swiveller, turning his eyes up to the ceiling, and making inquiries as to his future of Fate, represented, for the nonce, by a fly. My "next" may be dated from the Isthmus of Darien, or from the shores of Styx. It may be Cunard, it may be Charon with whom

I next take passage; and I own that I should very much like to visit Otaheite.

I have not seen the book to which this preface will be appended. I may never see it. It has been "revised and settled" by a kind friend in England; but I have not the slightest wish to saddle him with any literary responsibility which may accrue therefrom. If there be any merit in the work, credit him with it. Whatever there is bad is mine. Rude and desultory, often tedious and always trivial, stuffed with mannerisms as a turkey is stuffed with truffles, brimful of impertinence, of egotism, and of obstinacy:—but what need is there to forestall the critics in the pursuit of their laudable vocation? I may simply state, in conclusion, that the letters here collected in book form originally appeared in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, and are now reprinted with permission; and I may add, that a very long connexion with the journal in question, although it has converted me into a kind of human teetotum, and given to my progression on this earth's surface a most fitful and erratic character, has enabled me, and may yet enable me, to see very much of the world and of cities, and of the ways of men, which otherwise, not being an Ambassador Extraordinary, or Baron

Rothschild, or the Flying Dutchman, I might have left unseen.

With this, ladies and gentlemen,
I am your most humble
and obedient servant.

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THE LOW COUNTRIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO IN NOVEMBER.

IT was but the other day, in a grand old Kentish cathedral, that the rosy-cheeked daughter of the verger, officiating as cicerone *pro tem.*—her papa was not to be disturbed from the one o'clock beefsteak pudding on which I found him refecting in his little watch-box of a house in the Dean's-yard, where I went to borrow the keys of the church—it was but last week that this young lady, who, albeit comely, and ringleted, and smart-bonneted, had somewhat of an ecclesiological aspect, who ran off the roll of Primates of All England with amazing facility, and had a mass of information respecting naves and aisles, finials and crockets, at her finger-ends and her tongue-tip, and who gave you altogether the notion that her first playground had been the cloisters, her first playmates the roguish chorister boys, her first idea of "bogey" connected with the dark entry and the shadowy crypts, and whose *beau ideal* of the Order of the Solemnization of Matrimony would be a full choral service — it was but last Saturday that the prettiest guide one would wish to have through a

Gothic fane, standing by the tomb of the Black Prince, and affably enlightening me as to the causes of the disappearance of the monument erst erected to Henry the Second's turbulent Jack Priest whom Tresham and the other felon knights slew, pointed out a long, smooth, elliptical furrow in the pavement, and told me that the stone had thus been worn away by the pilgrims who came in days of old to offer their orisons at the shrine of Thomas à Becket. It is as likely as not, for St. Thomas of Canterbury was, during many centuries, a popular saint. Indeed, one is the more inclined to believe in the genuflection-worn flagstones of his cathedral than in Rizzio's blood-stain on the floor at Holyrood—which, I suspect, they rub up from time to time with furniture polish to keep it dark.

I could not help thinking of the pilgrims' furrow at Canterbury as the modest calèche and pair I had hired at the hotel debouched on to the boulevard from the quaint old streets of King Leopold's capital, and began to rattle over the flags of the *chaussée* which leads, through the Forest of Soignies, from Brussels to Waterloo. I had commenced the great English pilgrimage. La Haye Sainte is full rather of infernal than of sanctified memories; but that first and last of fields makes up a shrine inexpressibly dear to the English heart. For ten miles along the causewayed track those furrows might be worn a foot deep. The affluence of English pilgrims never ceases. The British palmer holds fast to his faith in Arthur and his knights. The plateau of Mont St.

Jean is his Round Table; Waterloo is his Tintagel—his Camelot. All the year round, on foul days and on fair days, in slush or in sunshine, he is to be found plodding over the field; greedily swallowing the threadbare humdrum of the guides; scanning every speck on the horizon through his glass; scribbling his name and address in every volume that lies open, on every wall that offers to his desperate charcoal or black-lead; cutting his name on every stump; asserting his Anglicism everywhere.

I grieve to tell it; but the very beginning of the pilgrimage to Waterloo is a disappointment. After a quarter of an hour's drive along a trim boulevard skirted by pert poplars, behind which rise the pseudo-Parisian houses which the Belgians persist in building, with a total disregard of the glorious models of mediæval architecture which abound in the lower town, you turn off into a *chaussée;* and the sulky Belgian coachman, who seems to have been driving backwards and forwards on this road so long as to have become utterly wearied and disgusted with Waterloo, growls out that you are in the Forest of Soignies. "The forest!" you ask wonderingly—"where is it?" The sulky coachman points with his whip to a brick-field. Close by are a couple of wind-mills, then several acres of ploughed fields, then a plantation of Brobdingnagian cabbages, then a long line of stacks of brushwood, fir cones, and peat sods laid up for fuel, then a shabby estaminet by the sign of *"Le coq tourni"*—can this be

Belgico-French for turncock?—and where a knife and fork, a plate, a glass, and a lump of bread painted on the door-jambs are helped out by the legend of "*Beufstracksx,*" (*sic,*) and *Bière de Louvain,* to be had within.

The road to Waterloo is the reverse of picturesque. The cottages are ugly, but clean; the peasantry uglier, but dirty. It is a pity that a little of the whitewash lavished on the exterior of the dwellings were not used, for decency's sake, on the garments and on the faces of the population. It is quite disheartening to see great trusses of clean straw, great stacks of clean hay, flocks of clean sheep, and herds of clean oxen, side by side with the grubbiest set of agriculturists to be seen anywhere out of the neighbourhood of a coal-pit. There is a manufactory of scented soap—*savon de toilette*—at Waterloo; but it is made, I should say, exclusively for exportation.

The *braves Belges* of the male sex appear to pass the greater portion of their time in smoking, spitting, sleeping on the benches in front of the beer-shops, playing skittles in the dry ground behind them, or offering to conduct you over the field of Waterloo. All the hard work seems to be done by the dogs and the women. The first-named intelligent animals are the shepherds, cowherds, and pig-tenders of the district; and until yesterday I never saw a little black dog with a curly tail gravely driving a flock of geese to the water. They likewise drag carts, and seem to enjoy the work, although the load imposed on their powers

of traction looks heavy enough to cause the hair of the Secretary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to stand erect. Two dogs are after all but a feeble team; and harnessed to a cart containing half-a-dozen cans of milk, a mountain of vegetables, a pile of faggots, and a lazy Belgian boy, the incubus seems intolerable. I don't know whether the dog acts as the camel is said to groan—but doesn't —at an excess of burden.

The women appear to toil harder still. It would shock Lord Houghton—it would shock any one who has debated the propriety of outdoor avocations in the case of the weaker sex—to see how the females in this part of the country have become bowed, bow-legged, stunted, and almost dwarfed, from laborious rural work. The greater number are as diminutive and decrepit as the Indians who carry charcoal into the city of Mexico, and who are among the wretchedest specimens of humanity I have ever seen. Prematurely aged, wrinkled, and haggard, clad in hideous caps and squalid bedgowns, and petticoats clinging to their forms, they clatter along in their huge wooden shoes, the most forlorn and degraded-looking objects you can conceive. Not long since, riding with a friend through the thriving town of Oldham in Lancashire, he made me a bet that two out of every three men we met should have their hands in their pockets, and he won. Travelling along the Belgian *chaussée*, I made mental wagers as to the ages of the peasant women

toiling on before me. But I soon grew confused, and abandoned speculation. Those who, looking at their backs, I had judged to be women of sixty, often, when I came to scan their faces, turned out to be girls of sixteen.

The children were dirty but fat, the chickens were many, the pigeons on their shelves more numerous still. There were chairs or spinning wheels before almost every cottage-door. Everything looked cheap and abundant. The two-sous loaf was black but big, faro and brown beer flowed almost for the asking, the barns were full to bursting, the live stock was brawny, the household stuff I could see through the cottage windows substantial, the crockery-ware stout and snowy, the pots and pans shining; yet for ten miles you scarcely meet a decently-clad person, and every other child on the road held out its grimy hand and begged. I suppose that the respectable juveniles were all at the communal schools, but the name of the children-beggars is legion. They swarm by the way-side. Like the bare-legged Scotch lassies who run with their glasses of-water as you approach Arthur's Seat at Edinburgh, they run by the carriage wheels, and the driver flails them away with his whip as though they were flies. Toddlekins of two years old make mendicant curtseys, and wave their little arms in supplication after a fashion at once graceful and pitiable to witness; the elder ones, with that terribly premature hoarseness of the child-beggar, thrust bouquets of wild

flowers under your nose, or in guttural scraps of broken English importune you for alms. It is the same law all over the world. Alexandria has its donkey-boys, and Edinburgh her bare-legged beggar hizzies. I daresay the hadjis who go to kiss the stone of the Kaaba at Mecca are bored to death by true-believing mendicants; and I know that the only professional touts and beggars to be met with in the United States —with the real professional whine and the glib professional lie—are to be found hanging about Saratoga and Niagara. It is the number of tourists who demoralize; the pilgrims make the beggars.

Mendicancy outside and extortion inside the houses are the rule all the way from Brussels to Nivelles. Fee-faw-fum in a blouse or a bedgown sits in every cottage and smells the blood of an Englishman. He grinds his bones to make his bread. The chapter relating to Waterloo in "Murray's Guide" is one continued caution to beware of the people whose trade it is to swindle you. The hotel-keepers are in league with the suburban aubergistes, and the hackney-carriage drivers with both. The man who sells sham relics "stands in" with the guide; and somebody, I presume, exacts his "regulars" from the sexton at the church at Waterloo, the farmer at Hougoumont, and the ingenious person who drives a roaring trade by showing the grave of the Marquis of Anglesey's leg. *L'union fait la force,* is the motto of constitutional Belgium. Combination among the battle-mongers of

Waterloo is strength. Everybody plays into everybody else's hands. They are all brothers, and the common quarry is the pilgrim. Like the night-cellar and dancing-room keepers at Liverpool, whom Mr. Dickens described in the "Uncommercial Traveller" as "waiting for fare"—waiting for the sailor, to fleece and bamboozle him, there stretch from Brussels ten miles of waiters upon Providence to send them Englishmen.

The harpies speak all languages, but they are fluentest in ours. They jabber with dreadful familiarity about Lord Hill, and Sir Thomas Picton, and Sir Edward Kerrison, and "Lord Raglan Somerset, who die afterwards in Crimmy." The honoured Scots Greys are tossed upon their tongues, and they take the name of the Scots Fusilier Guards in vain. They know the dull red of "Murray" in a moment, and clamorously tell you that their "name is in the book —ver good guide, ver good horse, ver good inn, Prince Alfred he here one two time, say all ver good." You will find English newspapers in the smallest taverns; time bills of the Dover and Calais route are stuck on every doorpost; others bear forged transcripts of the outstretched palm of Allsopp, and the blood-red triangle of Bass, and you are invited to partake of apocryphal bitter beer, which is merely faro in extra fits of sourness. Announcements in English, that "the river Moselle is now open" abound. Portraits of the Queen and Mr. Spurgeon, of whom the Belgians seem to think all Englishmen must be inordinately

fond, are in the windows; and one rogue at L'Espinette had, in unconscious imitation of the railway waiting-room at Richmond, a fat English Common Prayer-book on his kitchen table. Surely the family of Ignatius Loyola, in the right line, cannot be extinct after this.

And here the carriage draws up opposite an odd structure, half Pagan and half Christian in appearance. To the nave, aisles, and tower of a church have been added a kind of dwarfed Pantheon, with a stumpy cupola and squat lantern, and one portico sprouting vertically from the apex of the other, like a second fungus from the first in a vinegar plant. Yet this—a Catholic place of worship too—is, to the English pilgrim, second only in reverent interest to St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. We have come to the village of Waterloo. That is the church. Over against it in the quiet street is a plain building of grey stone, once the post-house, now a private dwelling; but within its walls the Duke of Wellington and Prince of Waterloo slept the night before and the night after the victory which has made him famous to all time.

The man who kept the keys of the church, and to whose ears the sound of our carriage wheels must have done good, was sent for; and pending his arrival a neat little combat of six took place in the porch; that is to say, I was set upon by five men in blouses, all guides, all possessors of the only correct plan of the battle, all—to believe their statement—described in the *libro*

d'oro of Murray, and all on the most intimate terms with his Royal Highness Prince Alfred, Baron Müffling, Colonel Marras, and M. Victor Hugo, whose unanimous verdict in each case had been that they were "ver good." I distributed among them a general blessing, to the grim contentment of the sulky coachman, whom I knew full well would presently recommend his own particular guide: and the sexton shut the door in their faces.

You may see hundreds of churches such as that of Waterloo in the villages of the Low Countries, but you shall hardly find one in which, one part being wholly Catholic, the other is unmistakably Protestant. I went first into that consecrated to the established faith of Belgium. It is pretty enough. The roof and columns gleam with whitewash; to the pillars are hung many pictures of impossible saints and martyrs, and the altar piece is a very tolerable piece of painting, the gift of a Bruxilloise lady. The pulpit is a handsome and elaborate example of carved work, which need not excite surprise, for this is the country of handsome pulpits. It is questionable, however, whether the sermons delivered from them come up to the workmanship; to judge, at least, from a discourse recently delivered by a village *curé*, in which the reverend orator, warning his hearers against a certain book now very popular—it is *not* M. Rénan's—tells his congregation that he has never read it, but that he has no doubt of its being directly inspired by the devil.

Before the altar there was a bier, and on it the "narrowe roome," as the old tombstones say—the coffin to which all must come. It was covered with a pall of white and blue, richly fringed with gold; and on the lid fresh bunches of flowers and wreaths of immortelles lay, while round about were ranged many tall tapers in their gilt sconces. The sexton murmured from behind his hand: "Twenty-one years. A lady. Of the highest consideration." Yes, so much parade was made over the clay of one who died peacefully in her bed, and of whom, out of her obscure village, no one ever heard. Not so enlarged were the obsequies of those of whom the tablets in the adjoining chapel tell the names. Their records are manifest; but where are their bodies? Few were shrouded; fewer shrived. No candles lighted them to the tomb; no priest sang in monotonous chant; no choir boys swung censers over them. Only, as they lay on the cold earth on the bloody ridges of Mont St. Jean, the father of my guide Martin Rison and his brother, carrion crows came in silent squads, stripped them of their bravery, took away their dinted weapons, cut off their very buttons for relics, and heaped them all into the common pit. Where they fell, with rare exceptions, they were buried. French cuirassier and English dragoon, Fusilier guardsman and Polish lancer, Mameluke and black German legionary, the horse and his rider, the human and the brute, were crowded together pell-mell, and crammed into the all-receiving earth. To make the mountain of the Lion,

thousands of tons of soil, mingled with human bones, were used. Even now, after fifty years, the ploughing of each spring turns up its quota of skulls and thigh bones. The English Radicals of forty years since, who hated the very name of Waterloo, used to assert, with savage glee, that cart-loads of the ghastly remains of the victors had been brought to England and sold to the lime-burners. An idle tale, I think. There was small need to clear that Golgotha. The kindly fields were glad to have their corses; and the earthly relics of many famous warriors have come peacefully up again as cabbages, and turnips, and rye.

I retraced my steps to the little round church, or ante-chapel, whichever it be; and the sexton unlocked two gates, facing each other, and I looked upon two elliptical walls thick hung with marble tablets and crowded with names. To the right are the English memorials; to the left the Dutch and German ones. Whether it be of the "battle," or the "*schlact*," or the "*slag van Waterloo*," these tablets all tell the same simple tale. Here, for once in a way, the mortuary mason has been stricken all but dumb. His fine utterances are choked by the immensity of the event. He has nothing to say about loving wives, devoted husbands, affectionate children, sorrowing friends, conspicuous abilities, shining virtues, afflictions that were sore, and physicians that were in vain. It is much if he speaks of Waterloo as a "memorable day," and whispers with 'bated breath of "the lustre of British arms." Tho

names are too much for the epitaph-maker. They crowd upon, they overwhelm him; and his chisel halts after he has told the stern and naked truth, that on the Eighteenth of June, 1815, this general or that captain was killed in battle.

I suppose it was for the reason that the officers of the famous British army were mainly heretics, that even their mural tablets were not thought worthy of admission into the orthodox portion of the church. So they are banished to the threshold, and testify to Belgian gratitude in the porch of a village church. In the little churchyard there are many more graves in which English officers are actually buried, and where the mortuary masons and the epitaph makers have had scope and verge enough. You might fancy that half the urn and quenched-torch and broken-column cutters of the New-road had emigrated to Flanders in the year 'fifteen. The inscriptions on most of these monuments, in contradistinction to those in the church, which are as fresh as though they were cut yesterday, have become painfully illegible. The same may be said of that on the column erected to Colonel Gordon on the field itself, which I have heard described as a really pathetic epitaph. Is there no hale Chelsea pensioner, no retired non-commissioned officer, with a turn for stone-cutting, who will take a periodical tour in the Low Countries, and, with loving mallet and chisel, enact the part of an Old Mortality, and freshen up the fading testimonies to the English worthies who lie here about? There are newer

tombs in the Crimea, too, which might be all the better for his ministrations. And in the country lying about Waterloo might be found, by diligent quest, more than one old monument erected to the memory of some companion of my Uncle Toby, a member of that army which swore so terribly in Flanders. The Senior and the Junior United, the Guards and the "Rag," would be glad, I warrant, to pay the travelling expenses of such an emissary; and there are surely equal reasons for perpetuating the names of those who fought under John Churchill and those who were led by Arthur Wellesley.

Epitaph for epitaph, there is nothing more sad than a mere name and date and mention of the manner of death. What is more eloquent than when the officers of a regiment have the thoughtful kindliness—as often happens now—to have the names of the common soldiers inscribed along with those of their commanders on a monument? Hobsons and Dobsons, Macfarlanes and O'Shaughnessys—humble and obscure creatures they were, swathed in scarlet blanketing, carrying Brown Bess for thirteenpence a day, and in danger of the black hole when they took too much beer; yet I have often pictured a Hobson's son, a Macfarlane's daughter, an O'Shaughnessy's widow, reading the quiet trophy, and pointing it out to their children with as much pride as a Herbert might feel on reading Ben Jonson's deathless lines on the Countess of Pembroke.

I may be floundering into a paradox; but it seems to me, so bald and meagre is this place as a mere sight,

that the best way to see Waterloo is with your eyes shut. Just blink from time to time, and take in a house, a hedge, a tree; then shut your eyes, and lean back in your carriage, and conjure up the ghosts. You need not wait long. They will come thick and fast upon you. Hill and Hardinge, and Saltoun and Fitzroy Somerset, in quaint coatees and bunchy epaulettes, and tight grey pantaloons, and huge cocked hats, congregate on the steps of the little post-house. There is the Duke's cook, late on the evening of the eighteenth, busy with his pots and pans, and calmly confident that his master will win the battle and come home to dinner. Here comes the Duke himself, in blue frock, white neckcloth, and cocked hat. He has been sixteen hours in the saddle, and Copenhagen has borne him without flinching. I see the phantom steed, as fresh as paint, and kicking out his heels, when the battle-day is done. And there, in an inner room, late at night, I see the chief doctor reading to the conqueror, as he rests on his hard-earned pallet, the list of the killed and wounded; and, as one after another the names of the dead—the loved and honoured dead—fall from the doctor's lips, the Prince of Waterloo sits up in bed, and the fast-chasing tears make white furrows on the face which is grimed swart as a miner's with the dust and the sweat of the battle.

Then, having exhausted the village of Waterloo, which is a mean and straggling little place enough, and but for those ghosts would be of no more account than

Garrett-lane, Wandsworth, we rattle along the causeway again to Mont St. Jean, a mile and a half further on. Keep blinking, and you shall see phantoms at every cottage door—phantoms at every casement. The long, long waggons I spoke of in the farmyards begin to lumber along; they are tenanted by wounded creatures in scarlet, wounded creatures in blue; friends and foes are mingled in one suffering mass. It matters little now who won the fight. The Britisher passes the wooden canteen to the Bonapartist; the need of both is desperate. Plumed aides-de-camp come galloping by, flying on the Duke's errands. They have been in the thickest of the fight, but have got not so much as a scratch. For as there are those, they say, who can drive a gig and write a leading article by intuition, so are there those who seem fated to be in eternal scrimmages and never to get hit.

Now, still blinking, I see a little cart full of good Beguines and Sisters of Charity, with their grey gowns, and boxwood rosaries, and snowy white towelling about the head, going out to the Farm of Mont St. Jean to tend the wounded. It is a huge barrack of a farm. Fifty years ago every barn and byre, every outhouse and office, were crammed with wounded men. The bravest gentlemen of England, the bravest gentlemen of France, and the poor diggers and delvers, forced by conscription or seduced by bounty to fight in a quarrel not their own, lay moaning and gasping in that which is to-day the path of the holiday-makers. They are but

ghosts now. I see the white-aproned doctors, with their leathern cases unrolled and full of shining blades—an awful shaving tackle. And, with a commiseration that knows no favourites, and a mercy whose quality is not strained, the holy women go about on their Master's business. They have the noblest and most delicate ladies of Brussels to help them in spreading ointment and scraping lint; and Donald the Highlander, and Jean the Sapeur, and Fritz the Black Brunswicker, find equal tenderness at their hands.

We tramp for ten minutes after we have left the carriage—or the carriage has left us—along a raised path of stiff clay. Then we cross a field, and stand at the entrance of a large, half-ruinous, untidy-looking farm. There is an entrance gate of some architectural pretensions, but one-half the planking of the door is shattered, and hangs by a single hinge. This is—or rather was—the château of Goumont or Hougoumont. The château proper, the country house of a Belgian gentleman, was burnt down during the fight—God knows with how many wounded British soldiers inside—and has never been rebuilt. The farm remains in nearly the same condition in which it stood fifty years ago. You have all heard that Hougoumont, situate three miles and a half from Waterloo Church, was the key of the British position during the fight. Had Napoleon taken it, he would have turned our flank; and there might have been no Waterloo Bridge, no Waterloo omnibuses, no Hero of Waterloo in the Waterloo-road, no Waterloo

medal, no Holy Alliance, no rock of St. Helena tenanted as once it was. But Napoleon couldn't take it. His brother Jerome, who that day of his life for once behaved well, battered against the walls of the old château with twelve thousand men; the wood around it was burnt; artillery, musketeers, sharpshooters thundered against it; the house itself was burnt about the ears of the defenders; the very fruit trees in the orchard were in a blaze; the walls of the kitchen garden were red hot; but the stout old place held out. It was the Belgian Basing House; but had a happier fate, and triumphed in the end. Riddled by howitzers and gutted by shells, Hougoumont held its own: for its garrison were certain men of adamant, called the Coldstream Guards.

Of the château only a blackened gable, half a window-case, and some jagged stumps of the foundations, remain. The walls of the pleasure and kitchen garden have been curiously patched and cobbled up; but the loopholes made for the British muskets are still visible. The guide points out certain bright red bricks in the outer wall which the French sharpshooters mistook for English uniforms, and "potted" incessantly. I wonder what account a dozen Armstrongs and swamp angels would have given of Hougoumont, after an hour's play on the pile. It did its part well, however, for its time. "The Belgian yeoman's garden wall," some wiseacre has written, "was the safeguard of Europe." The wiseacre should have waited "a wee." He would have found that Europe was obliged to seek for other safe-

guards; and that fifty years after the battle of Waterloo very nearly every purpose for which it was fought has been set aside, or rendered null. The Bourbons, who were to be set up again, *in æternum*, have come to grief all over Europe; the letter "N" is once more the first in the French alphabet; and the "Belgian yeoman," who was given over to the King of the Dutchmen to have and to hold, has won his independence, and gotten a King of his own from Coburg.

Close to the ruined château, and rising from an indescribable mass of outhouse litter, is a little chapel, not much bigger, and not very unlike an English village cage for vagrants. I have seen a good many cavalry horses picketed in churches in New Spain; and in Virginia once I saw a baptismal font used as a receptacle for cigar boxes and bottles of Bourbon whiskey; but for the abomination of desolation in miniature, I will back the chapel at Hougoumont. There is a blackened stone block and a *hayt pas* chipped and crumbling. This was the altar—over it yet remains a wooden figure of the Madonna and Child. So at least you may conjecture from the position of the arms of the Divine Mother. The child is gone; so are the Virgin's nose, and hands, and feet. They have been "whittled" away by pious amateurs of relics. Beside the door is a wooden crucifix, which they say was miraculously preserved from the flames—the fire, which was raging all around, having stopped short at the foot of the cross. Its base is certainly charred, while the perpendicular and arms remain.

The bare whitewashed walls of the chapel and the very roof are covered, I may say it without exaggeration, with millions of names, addresses, and dates in every known language. It is as though the Tower of Babel had been built hard by, and when the confusion of tongues took place the divided nations had rushed in here to try their 'prentice hands at their new-learnt orthography; or you may fancy, if you please, that Cadmus here gave lessons in polite letter-writing to all humanity. These inscriptions rise to the height of fifteen feet. The guide told me that some of the visitors attached pencils, or bits of charcoal, to the ends of walking-sticks and parasols, and so scrawled from the ground; while others borrowed ladders from the farmers, and mounted to their work. Every five years or so they whitewash the interior of the chapel, but six months afterwards the walls are covered again with names as thick as peas. Lord Byron was not too proud to write his noble autograph here when he came abroad on Childe Harold's pilgrimage. Some enthusiast with an eye to the main chance, cut out the piece of the wall containing his lordship's signature bodily, and carried it off to England, where I dare say it fetched a good price.

I think there has been a good deal of virtuous indignation wasted on this practice of scribbling and whittling in places of renown. It is snobbish, no doubt, and significative of vulgar conceit, quite useless and slightly idiotic; but I don't think it does anybody

much harm. Again, it is a practice as old as humanity itself. The Romans and the Greeks were wall-scribblers; I have no doubt that the bricks of Babylon had their scrawlings, and that could we scrape away the sand-bath in which the Sphinx is couchant, we should find at the base a whole labyrinth of old Egyptian names. Lean over that beautiful marble balcony at the Ducal Palace at Venice, looking towards the Lido, and you will find the parapet honeycombed with Italian names, dating some of them many centuries back. Furthermore the practice has its uses. Who would not mourn to hear of the destruction of the old oak panelling at Eton and Westminster and Harrow, where the names of Byron and Canning, Fox and Sheridan, Peel and Palmerston, yet attest the keenness of their boyish pocket-knives? And who would not give thrice its weight in gold for an inch of planking on which William Shakspeare, in an idle moment, had cut his name? Finally, to denounce the practice is simply to bite a file, and cry midnight at high noon. It has prevailed ever since the use of letters was known, and it will prevail—our virtuous indignation and pungent sarcasms nothwithstanding, till Ignorance, that oldest of anarchs, swallows letters bodily, and universal darkness covers all.

We walked from Hougoumont another half mile to "La Montagne du Lion," or Mound of the Belgic Lion, whence a bird's-eye view of the entire field of battle can be best obtained. The mound is a huge

tumulus of turf two hundred feet high, its sides perfectly smooth, and resembling nothing so much as one of those conical "warmers" which, full of beer and spices, are stuck into tap-room fires for the manufacture of purl. It is a bright green in hue, and very ugly. At the summit, reached by a steep flight of stone steps, is a more hideous construction still, the lion himself, a most unsightly monster, not of iron or bronze, not unlike a bloated poodle dog, with his tail between his legs, and his paw on what might be taken for a monstrous Dutch cheese, and an imbecile grin on his countenance. He looks like a lion that has been in love, and made a fool of himself; like a lion who in his conflict with the unicorn has been so soundly and ignominiously thrashed as to be degraded from the royal arms and set up here for a Low-Dutch cock-shy; like a lion that has been turned out of a menagerie for stealing the rations of the racoon; like anything, indeed, but an emblem of courage, and strength, and nobility. Mr. Cockerill, of Liége, cast him, and he cost many thousands of guilders. He is supposed to stand over the very spot where the Prince of Orange was wounded; and as, at this time of day, it does not matter five brass farthings whether the Prince of Orange was wounded at Waterloo, or ever did anything beyond supplying a rhyme for porringer, one almost feels inclined to regret that Marshal Gérard's soldiers did not blow the Belgic lion up, as they threatened, in the year 'thirty-two. To add to the absurdly forlorn appearance of this

doleful brute, some Belgian engineers have lately been stationed on the top of the mound, for the purpose of making a topographical survey. A kind of pavilion or cockloft has been built over the lion's back, and this gives him the appearance of a calf-elephant shrinking under the weight of an immense howdah.

But this leoline nuisance has been productive of more mischief than the exciting of critical feelings. The Belgians having, by running away, done their best to lose the battle, began, directly the victor's back was turned, to do their best to spoil the field. To make this congested tumulus, the original ground has been cut away. You may see the former level seven feet above the present one. The spot where the Duke stood with his staff during the greater part of the day has disappeared; in fact, the plateau of Mont St. Jean, properly so called, exists no longer.

At the foot of the mound is a pretty little hotel, the repository of the Waterloo Museum formed by the late Serjeant-Major Cotton, a brave old dragoon, who fought on the great day, and for many years afterwards officiated as the most trustworthy and intelligent of the guides to Waterloo. Another old English non-commissioned officer, named Munday, late of the 7th Hussars, is Serjeant-Major Cotton's successor. The Hôtel du Musée is kept by a civil and chatty Englishwoman, Mr. Cotton's niece, and it is very pleasant to see and hear the rosy-cheeked, fair-haired little children of the family toddling about and crowing

and laughing among the skulls and the shakoes, the guns and bayonets of the great fight. The museum is very well worth seeing, for the articles exhibited are undeniably genuine—found on the field, or procured from neighbouring farmers, in the years immediately following the battle. You might spend a day here, not unprofitably, among cuirasses and back pieces, pistols and holsters, plumes and lances, bearskins and foraging caps, orderly-books and sabertaches, belt clasps and gorgets, pouch plates and linstocks, boots and saddle-bags; "Napoleon's camp-kettle, marked with the letter 'N,' and 'Voyages,' V. 2 J, and a clarinet, engraved Cramer, London." There are plenty of skulls, too, and other anatomical kinds of *bric-à-brac* curious to those of a palæontological turn of mind.

But you very soon get weary of the relics, and, in truth must be told, of Waterloo into the bargain. From the Museum to La Haye Sainte, a farmhouse where the King's German Legion fought so desperately, and were almost wholly cut to pieces by the French; from La Haye Sainte to La Belle Alliance, Napoleon's head-quarters, and thence back again to Mont St. Jean, your life is rendered a burden to you by the swarms of touters, mendicants, and vagabonds of every description, worrying you to buy bullets, buttons, eagles, belt plates, sword hilts, and pistol stocks, or walking-sticks cut from the wood of Hougoumont. Such a stick I think would be about as definite a

souvenir of Waterloo as a brick from Jack Cade's house, or a pint of water from the Red Sea, would be of the Kentish rebellion or Pharaoh and his host. These touters and relic vendors were not in the least like the picturesquely attired Flemings whom Sir Edwin Landseer has painted in his well-known picture of the Duke describing the field to the Marchioness of Douro. I saw no coquettish caps, no gaily striped-petticoats, no burly sportsmen with game-bags and meerschaum pipes, no flasks of *gris flamand*. I only once saw a mob of sons and daughters of the horseleech, whose cry was "ver good," "give Anglish money," and who were ragged, dirty, and not unfrequently impudent. As it happened on this particular day, we were nearly the only party of tourists on the field. At the Hôtel du Musée there were but two carriages put up; at Mont St. Jean none but ours. We thus escaped having a good deal of Podsnappery; but, on the other hand, the relic vendors and the beggars had us all to themselves.

We were glad to plod back to Mont St. Jean; dismiss our guide, Martin Rison, who proved a very honest and obliging fellow, and did *not* swindle us; and lunch off the beautiful beefsteak and the sweetest pigeons, in a room where there was certainly one portrait of the Duke of Wellington, in full field-marshal's uniform, bestriding what seemed to be an Exmoor pony, and quaffing an enormous bumper of faro beer, but the rest of whose pictorial decorations consisted exclusively of coloured prints commemorating the ex-

ploits of Napoleon I. There he is, as large as life, in lithography, "Napoleon le Grand." There he is at Austerlitz, at Marengo, at Wagram—never as the defeated exile—always as the conqueror and king; and I can't help suspecting that the Belgians have been on that side of the hedge throughout, and in their heart of hearts are rather sorry that we won the battle of Waterloo.

But I am treading on delicate ground. In penning this account, I have endeavoured to keep one purpose steadily in view until the end: not to attempt anything like a topographical description of the field of battle, and not to venture upon so much as three lines of consecutive narrative of what took place there on the 18th day of June, 1815. I think that we have had enough, and to spare, by this time of the Battle of Waterloo. I think that we have heard rather too much about the hollow road of Ohain and the charge of Michaud's cuirassiers. I think that the controversy as to whether the Duke really said, "Up, Guards, and at 'em," or whether Cambronne met a summons to surrender by a piece of lofty claptrap, or by a filthy expletive, is by this time pretty well played out. The battle-field, disfigured and mutilated as it has been by the Dutch and Belgians, will ever be interesting to Englishmen. The battle itself, thank God, is a thing of the past. The descendants of the brave men who fought so good a fight there, bear each other no rancour now. The hands of the victors and the vanquished are fast locked

in friendship. It would have been better, perhaps, had English and French men known somewhat more of each other fifty years since. Why so many thousand throats need have been cut, I cannot rightly tell; but, as Southey says, "it was a famous victory."

CHAPTER II.

BRUSSELS IN AUTUMN—THREE CLASSES OF REFUGEES.

THE handsome and lively little city of Brussels—which, although not half so populous as Manchester, and not quite so big as Sheffield, gives itself, and with some reason, the loftiest airs, as presenting a kind of metropolitan and imperial aspect not possessed by any other continental capitals, with the exceptions of Paris and St. Petersburg—is just at present, and in a triple sense, a city of refuge. It is not that I wish in any way to qualify Brussels as a *refugium peccatorum*. The Mr. O'Doos and Captain Raffs of British indebtedness are not to be found here in greater numbers than in other foreign towns where luxury reigns, and dupes are to be had for the picking up. The impecunious Earl of Crabs still writes his testimonials to the virtues of Doctor Akakia's flour of lentils from the Baths of Lucca. The Honourable Algernon Deuceace still affects Wiesbaden, or runs over to Hombourg to change his venue and his luck. It is at Boulogne that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley yet promenades the pier, tries to get advances from M. Adam, the banker, and makes desperate attempts to renew her acquaintance with

Mrs. Hook Eagles, "on her way to Switzerland." Nor has the cracked and crumbling little French town where Dessein's hotel still flourishes—where the court-yard, famous for the *désobligeante* in which Yorick sat, and the room in which he was rude to the Franciscan monk, may yet be seen—and where poor George Brummell, in the first stage of his sad journey to insolvency and idiocy, tremblingly compounded from his old recipe the peerless Prince's Mixture, and sent it to George IV.; who snuffed, pronounced it excellent, went on to Hanover, and left his old friend and boon companion to die in the Hospital for Imbeciles at Caen:—nor has this place lost its attractions to those who have good reasons for leaving their own country, but keep as close to it as they can, and love to peer through their telescopes, on clear days, at the white cliffs of Albion. Still haunting the *estaminets*, hanging about the railway terminus, watching with a stale and accustomed air the arrival and departure of the steamers, you may see that seedy, done-up, broken-down Englishman whose decadence has been so touchingly and tersely traced in one of Mr. Dickens's minor works: "The place of his decease was Calais: the cause brandy."

Nevertheless, in Brussels, at this writing, the tents of Kedar are set up. In them, or in the clean and commodious dwellings of a city as comfortable and as clean, are domiciled three classes of refugees. First, the people who have run away from Paris through fear of the cholera; next, the people who have been abso-

lutely driven from the capital of France by the daily increasing costliness of living and house-rent there; last, the enthusiastic politicians, mainly old professors of barricade building and young *enfants perdus* of the Normal School, to whose aspirations for a democratic and social republic the existing government of France has, not altogether irrationally, taken exception. I propose to touch upon a few of the characteristics of each of these classes, in the hope that the result will be to give a sufficiently accurate idea of existing society in Brussels.

The first two sections of exiles—the people who have run away from *cholera atrox*, and those who have been forced to fly by high rents and unconscionable market-prices—it must be confessed, clash. The former have plenty of money; the latter not quite enough. It is useless to tell the cholera fugitives that the epidemic is at an end in Paris. They have not half got over their terror yet. There is no more gallant and courageous creature alive than your Frenchman; he is always courting the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth; but he can't stand the cholera. There are some things too dire for human endurance. "*Ma, c'è il cannone,*" once cried a whole regiment of Neapolitan grenadiers to the general who expostulated with them for bolting from the first whiff of grapeshot. The explanation was deemed sufficient. No maccaroni-eaters braver than they; they were very Paladins; but they could not be expected to stand cannon practice. The

Frenchwoman too, as a rule, is not valiant; and she and her lord, multiplied by many hundreds, have scampered away from the plague-smitten city to Brussels, in Brabant.

But why to Brussels? it may be asked. The reason is obvious—because Brussels is a Paris in miniature. London is but ten hours and a half from Paris; but what Frenchman will visit London unless he is absolutely compelled to do so? There are watering-places galore, but, save to the German gambling-dens, and he is a professed punter, a Frenchman would as soon think of going to a watering-place in November as of omitting to go to the play on Sunday night. As for Italy, the Mediterranean, Spain, the East, those places are all *là bas*. Ambassadors, merchants, savants whose expenses are paid by the Minister of Public Instruction, or artists with subventions from the École des Beaux Arts, may undertake such perilous journeys; but to the general Parisian they are all *terra incognita*. Shuddering, then, at the daily registers of mortality, and seeing in his distorted imagination an Hôtel Dieu at the corner of every street, the Parisian has packed up his trunk and sped on the wings of the locomotive to Brussels. The conversations, full of agonised alarm, to be heard among the fugitives by the Chemin de Fer du Nord are quite ludicrous. Of many of the minor things of existence the real Parisian is wonderfully ignorant. He has gotten into his head, just now, the notion that Asiatic cholera is in some manner or another connected with hydrophobia. Advertisements of reme-

dies, in which "*cholera*" and "*rage*" are coupled together, meet the eye in every newspaper.

The estimable fraternity of Benedictine monks has profited to a very large extent by the cholera panic. Of old time the worthy religious who follow the rule of St. Benedict were renowned for writing good books. In this age they have become more celebrated for making good liquor. Those capital cordials, known as *chartreuse jaune* and *chartreuse verte*—the quality of the first of which is tested by its making you sneeze, and of the second by its making you cough—and which may be described as the sublimated quintessence of cold punch, have been declared, on the highest medical authority, to be unfailing specifics against cholera. So everybody is drinking *chartreuse*. The wisest doctors are those who invent pleasant remedies. What with the green cordial, the yellow cordial, and other amenities, the cholera emigrants in Brussels find life not wholly intolerable. By "making believe" a good deal, as the Marchioness observed to Mr. Swiveller, *àpropos* of the orange-peel and water which she imagined to be sherry, the exiles can almost fancy that they are in Paris. The Hôtels de l'Europe, de Flandre, de France, and de Bellevue, are as good as any in the Rue de Rivoli. There is, it is true, no Grand Hôtel in Brussels, which is perhaps a blessing; but Mengelle's restaurant, in the Rue Royale, fully equals Philippe's in the Rue Montorgueil, Paris, which is saying a good deal. There are plenty of English livery stables where you can hire carriages;

and the horses here seem to belong to a breed peculiarly adapted to locomotion in a steep and hilly-streeted city, their fore legs being to all appearance considerably shorter than their hind ones. The same phenomenon is apparent among the equine race in the city of Quebec in Canada. Whether there exists another breed with hind legs shorter than their fore ones, and peculiarly fitted for going down hill, I have not stayed to inquire.

To resume: the Galéries St. Hubert are a very fair imitation of the Palais Royal; the Park may, at a very long shot, be brought down to compete with the Gardens of the Tuileries; the Place Royale is a Lilliputian Place Vendôme; the Rue de la Loi, where the Ministerial departments and public offices are situated, may vie, if it likes to risk the comparison, with the Place du Carrousel; and the Boulevards de Cologne, de Schaarbeck, and de Waterloo may be named in the same category—there is a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth, and degrees in everything—with Malesherbes and Magenta, the Italiens and the Capucines. Your genuine Parisian is a great amateur of military display; and there is enough trumpeting and drumming, guard-mounting and parading, in Brussels, every day, to satisfy the most ardent admirer of glorious war's pomp, pride, and circumstance. The Civic Guard of Brussels is a triumphant fact, whereas the National Guard of Paris has, since the Second Empire, become slightly nebulous, not to say mythical. It must gladden the heart of the *bon bourgeois de Pantin* to see his Flemish

brethren arrayed in all the majesty of civic soldierdom —red worsted epaulettes, *pompons*, cross-belts, and all. The burgess warriors of Brussels must remind him of the good old days when the *bourgeoisie*, too, was supreme in France, when Louis Philippe walked about in a round hat and with an umbrella under his arm, and called at the Rue de Valois to pay his half-yearly subscription to the *Constitutionnel:* when the two greatest men in France were Jaques Lafitte and Armand Bertin; when, if France was in danger and needed the arms of her sons, the National Guard of Fontenay-aux-Roses, sent word to say that they were to be found at Fontenay-aux-Roses—that was all; and when to discover the Cross of the Legion of Honour you had to look behind the shop counter and in the till.

But in one other and special respect does the exile of Lutetia find consolation in the cheery city of St. Hubert. The theatres of Brussels are the theatres of Paris in little, closely copied, and occasionally, it may be, slightly caricatured. At the Théâtre de la Monnaie, which, architecturally speaking, is really a very sumptuous edifice, they were giving *Robert le Diable* on Sunday night; and the affable functionary at the *bureau de location* where I secured my stalls told me, in answer to an inquiry as to the cause of certain plaintive yelpings in the distance—it was two p.m. on Sunday afternoon —that the artists of the Théâtre de la Monnaie were *à la vingt-troisième répétition générale de l'Africaine.* Twenty-three full rehearsals. That is much. Meyer-

beer's thundering musico-melodrama ought to go off smoothly enough after that. One evening I was reading at the café opposite the Opera House, and heard the gentleman next me—who was got up after the precise cut of an *habitué* of the third row of the stalls in the Rue Lepelletier, but whose tongue betrayed him a Fleming—tell the gentleman with whom he was playing dominoes, and who was elderly, sallow, and high-dried, and had the air of a superannuated prompter, that he purposed patronizing the performance of the *Huguenots* that evening. Mademoiselle X., he said, sang so ravishingly. She had the real Parisian *cachet*, the genuine ring of the Académie Impériale. "Yes," the superannuated prompter replied, gravely, "she sang in the choruses these two years ago, and she sang out of tune, as she does now." This is about the sum of the philosophy of theatricals in Brussels. You have all the *chefs d'œuvres*, a little the worse for wear, and all the celebrities at second or third hand. Are there not forty-sous restaurants in Paris, where they are said to give you *réchauffés* of the delicacies which were served up at Véfour's and Véry's the day before?

The Théâtre de la Monnaie has its third row of orchestra stalls, and its third-rate *habitués*, who lounge in to hear the last stanza—mind, only the last stanza—of *Quand je quittai ma Normandie*, and then lounge out again, to hold lisping converse in the *couloirs* about the tenor's unattainable *ut de poitrine* and the prima donna's unauthenticated sore throat. There is a third-rate

"High Life" here—a term just adopted by Continentals—there are third-rate dandies, who drive third-rate tandems and dogcarts, and wear cheap great-coats christened "Stamford Warringtons" and "Comte Lagranges." There is, I am told, a demi-semi *demi-monde*—a Quartier Bréda, with a smack of Dutch cheese to it. Its inhabitants much more resembling Rubens's second wife than Ninon de l'Enclos, have no need to dye their hair red, for it is carroty by nature, nor to revel in artificially distended skirts, for from time immemorial eight linsey-woolsey petticoats have been the ordinary complement of Flemish beauty. Reinforced by sundry emerited and *passée* celebrities of the Bois de Boulogne, the fair denizens of the Brussels Bréda pass muster, and "make believe" that this homely, good-natured, good-hearted little city is frivolous and vicious.

Then, if the exile's tastes are less operatic than spectacular, there is a reproduction in miniature of the Porte St. Martin, in the pretty and tasteful Théâtre des Galéries St. Hubert. I went to see the interminable spectacle, *La Biche aux Bois* there one night. It was at its sixtieth representation. In Paris it was almost at its sixtieth hundred. Everything—costumes, scenery, music, *mise en scène*—had been scrupulously modelled after the Parisian pattern. The Belgian adapter had just ventured to introduce into the dialogue a local allusion to the potato disease, under which the farmers of Brabant are suffering; but the

interpolation fell flat, and was evidently resented by the audience as an impertinence. They wanted the Parisian Princess who was changed into a deer, not a Flemish one. A few of the leading characters were supported by Frenchwomen—*pensionnaires* of the Batignolles or the Folies Dramatiques, I should say; but the vast majority of the *danseuses* and *figurantes* and *comparses* were Flemish; and it was very droll to see the graceful but simply outrageous indecencies of modern French stage dress—our *poses plastiques* are decorous to them—lavished upon a parcel of ungainly, gawky, buy-a-broom looking damsels, who would have been evidently much more at home in mobcaps, linsey-woolsey petticoats, and *sabots*. It was droller still to mark how—the few private boxes, the orchestra stalls, and the front of the dress circle being occupied by foreigners and "cholera refugees"—the great mass of the closely-packed audience consisted of flat-faced, broad-backed Flemings, comfortable family people with tribes of capacious children, listening with a fat simper on their inane countenances to the epigrammatic wickedness of the French dramatist, and staring their honest eyes out of their heads to see Lise, and Gretchen, and Ursula, their compatriots, capering about in the longest of pink tights and the shortest of knickerbockers. They were "making believe" to be immoral; but it wouldn't do. You could see they were family folk, and in their hearts scandalized, and that they would have a dreadful deal to confess when they next

went to those little pious money-takers' boxes in the cathedral of Ste. Gudule.

Much more at home were these worthy Low Dutch people at the Cirque Renz, in the Rue de la Loi, a vast circular structure—temporary, of course, for there are no such wanderers on the face of the earth as circus people, except perhaps special correspondents. At the Cirque Renz the family folks see nothing that can scandalize; for the lady horse-riders, although liberal in the display of their limbs, seem to have a right so to display them in the pursuit of a most arduous and perilous vocation. The caperers of *La Biche aux Bois* are revolting; but there is nothing indelicate, to the most prurient mind, in Kiss's Amazon or in the picture of Hildegarde rescuing Charlemagne. The Cirque Renz was thronged. The officers of the Royal Guard —tremendous "counts" in their way—were there in great numbers, "making believe" to do omnibus-box life by lounging into the stables, and flirting with the *écuyères*, but otherwise displaying a commendable absence of ostentation by partaking of the vast glass mugs of faro beer which a sandy-haired waiter brought round during the intervals of the performances. The Duke of Brabant, whom everybody seems to like, as a jovial, sensible, open-hearted gentleman—as kindly and cheerful as that other First Gentleman who lives at Marlborough House—was to patronize a grand performance at the circus for the benefit of an association in aid of "*les Pauvres honteux*." An odd title. Is

poverty, then, a shameful thing? Ah! but this means something else. *Les Pauvres honteux* are not the shameful, but the shamefaced poor; the poor who shrink from letting their poverty be known—who pine and starve obscurely and uncomplainingly. In this country of moderate incomes, these "shamefaced poor" must needs be abundant. Ours is the land of enormous wealth and utter destitution, both utterly shameless; and I don't think there could be a stronger illustration of the innate kind-heartedness of the Belgians than the existence of a society who, without blowing of trumpets and parading of names, quietly track out respectable people who cannot dig and are ashamed to beg, and help them.

There is nothing so cosmopolitan as a circus. Cooke might be a Chinese name, and Batty a Persian one. Mr. Sleary is at home everywhere. Those patient, willing, intelligent Dobbins speak—for all they are dumb beasts—a language which all can understand. The riding-master, in his white waistcoat, very pigeon-breasted, laced-striped trousers, and varnished boots, is the riding-master of Franconi's, of Constantinople, of New York, of Chicago, of Havana, of Mexico. The smell of the tan and the sawdust have an odour of home—a home common to all the world. That man-monkey, in how many countries have I seen him hunt for fleas, gobble up the farmer's dinner, and array himself in the farmer's coat! And the "Arab of the desert with his faithful steed"—the Arab not in the least

akin to the lean brown Bedouin of real life—the satin-skinned steed more resembling a Suffolk punch than the weedy *étalon* of the Sahara—how many times have I seen that Arab set upon by ferocious Janissaries in fez caps and hessian boots, and, when wounded to the death, caress his faithful steed, and with trembling hands surreptitiously pop into his mouth a lump of sugar or a slice of carrot, in order that at the supreme moment, when he is being borne out of the arena by four grooms, his sweetmeat-giving hand may be kissed by the intelligent and grateful animal. At this incident many of the audience who had not seen the sugary episode shed tears. The pudgy little boy behind me, sprawling in a maternal lap as wide as the Zuyder Zee, fairly blubbered, and made his mamma promise that she would buy him a wooden horse on the morrow. There is nothing undignified, I take it, in blubbering, or at least whimpering, over the Arab's faithful steed; over the other poor horse who is shot in the leg, and, with a bandage round his ankle, limps round the circle to slow music; over the British sailor who lights his pipe on horseback, and dances the T. P. Cooke hornpipe on horseback, and is shipwrecked on horseback, and reefs the maintopsail, and is flung overboard, and swims for his life, and secures a hencoop, and is rescued by hospitable Deal boatmen, and goes down on his knees and thanks Heaven for his deliverance, all on horseback.

You were a little boy yourself once, and were taken

to Mr. Andrew Ducrow's circus in the Westminster-road. You saw the same scenes in the circle: the same "highly-trained steed Brabason;" the same imperfectly-educated Shetland pony, not much bigger than a Newfoundland dog, brought on by the clown, and expected by the audience to do great things, but who wouldn't jump over the hurdles or through the hoops —who would do nothing, in fact, save burrow out a hole in the sawdust, and lie there, heels upwards, like a lazy little dog, and bite at the groom who strove to recall him to a sense of his duty. Wherever you go you find the circus, and you remember the days of your youth—Ducrow and Widdicomb, Franconi and Auriol, as you have been born on this or that side of the Channel. Horse-riders are all brothers and sisters. They have no international jealousies. An equestrian treaty of commerce has bound them together for ever.

There were four clowns in the ring of the Cirque Renz: two Italians, a German, and an Englishman. The manager was Teutonic; the British sailor a Frenchman; the principal lady-rider a Scotchwoman. The performances came to an end with most sensational *éclat*. Mr. Bathy Cooper, the "unconquerable beast-tamer," exhibited as a wind-up his cage full of lions and lionesses. It made your flesh creep and your heart hobble to see Mr. Bathy Cooper leap into the den of the wild beasts; but you were reassured so soon as you perceived how thoroughly afraid the wild beasts were of Mr. Bathy Cooper. He made of his back, as it were,

the tiled roof of a house, and the lions and lionesses raced over him, growling dreadfully, however, instead of caterwauling. He thrust his head into the biggest lion's mouth, and then, clutching the creature's huge jaws, clacked his strong teeth together, like castanets. He larruped his pupils with a gutta-percha whip, and I dare say he had a neat crowbar in his pocket in case of need. He sat upon one wild beast, and rested his feet on another, and poked a third spoftively in the ribs. You should have seen at last the group of tawny, acrid-smelling devils crouched together in a cowering pyramid in a corner of the cage, shrinking and wincing from the little lash of the beast-tamer. The biggest lion is furthest off. He thinks he is out of the whip's range, and he gives his master a howl of hatred, and spits at him, and flings out his great paw towards him, as though he would dearly like to give him ONE—just one, for luck.

I wonder what would happen were Mr. Bathy Cooper to drop his whip through the bars. Would his pupils fall upon him and eat him up in twenty seconds? That lion on his hind-legs, impotently pawing at the bars, looks like it. Why, that is Sir Edwin Landseer's lion—not the Trafalgar-square shadow, but the magnificent beast he painted for the Duke of Wellington in the Van Amburgh picture. How marvellously true to nature, true in every hair, true in every line, the great English artist has been! In a myriad of shows I had never seen a beast-tamer in my life before; and I am

not ashamed to confess that I dreamt all night of Mr. Bathy Cooper. It became easy then to understand how a man like the Great Duke, bravest among the brave, accustomed to danger in every shape, and next-door neighbour to death for thirty years of his life, could grow quite absorbed and fascinated by that which is no vulgar raree show, but a surprising example of indomitable courage, patience, and presence of mind. I can understand how the old hero made this picture his hobby, and went to Sir Edwin's studio while it was painting, time and again, insisting on the reproduction of every detail—the lion-tamer's switch, the bit of orange-peel, the playbill—and causing, as a coronation to the work, a quotation from the Psalms to be inscribed on the frame. I fancy somehow that Mr. Bathy Cooper must be an American. A wiry, well-set, dense-bearded, Western kind of a man he looks, with the grey eye of power—the eye that has watched many "big b'ar fights," and weighed the eventualities of a contest with many of the most catawampous of critters. Eugene Sué gave his lion-tamer, Morok, a preliminary education as a Russian courier; but a trapper's life in the West would be really, I should think, the best apprenticeship for him who desires to acquire dominion over wild beasts.

There are three or four more theatres in Brussels—little vaudeville houses, all dear to the Parisian exiles; but there is one house more exclusively patronised by the Belgians, and where they are most thoroughly at

home. This is the Nationale Schouwburg, where pieces are performed in that Flemish language which is still the ordinary parlance of three-fourths of the population, and to give literary elegance to which Monsieur—or, I should here say, Mynheer—Hendrik Conscience has made such commendable efforts. I do not understand Flemish. It reads like German with the edge off—like bottled beer which has been allowed to stand too long uncorked, and has grown flat and sour. When you hear it spoken, the impression produced in your mind is that you are partially deaf, and that some people near you are quarrelling in English. You can't distinguish the words, but the sounds are as those of your own tongue. So I was not much edified at the Nationale Schouwburg. How would you like to see a piece called *Rigbrock en Stillbout?* But the sensation drama of the day bears the alarming title of *Tot slot de slyd van Tacamburo.* There is De Majoor, and Flip, Sergent, and Petrus, Korporaal, enacted by Mynheer Jaach van Koch, and a mysterious personage styled a "horenblazer." What is a "horenblazer?"

Tacamburo is a Mexican piece; and the "*Juaristen,*" represented by a slouched-hatted miscreant named "Alfons Tuedes y Syelra," are signally discomfited therein. It is, perhaps, slightly "unhistorical," as Dr. Colenso would say. At Tacamburo, in Mexico, if I mistake not, many officers and soldiers of the "Keizerin Charlotte's regiment," which was enrolled to serve the Emperor Maximilian for his sweet Belgian

Empress's sake, came to signal grief. The fiasco of the Charlotte regiment forms well-nigh the only political question—apart from that of the Clericals *versus* the Liberals, which is chronic—now agitating Belgium. The Mexican contingent was officered by some of the most gallant young men, belonging to the most distinguished families, in King Leopold's realm. They had grown sick—and no wonder—of never-ending garrison duty, billiard-playing, faro-drinking, and play-house-lounging. They were glad to go to Mexico. They might as well have gone to the moon. Just imagine the folly of sending the natives of a flat, cold, quiet, peaceable, equable country—a country of umbrellas and goloshes, and where you need not travel ten miles without a railway offering itself, and without the slightest training beyond home drill—to campaign in a semi-savage region, one-third horrible mountain, one-third sandy desert, and the other third voluptuous summer clime. The monticule of the lion at Mont St. Jean is the tallest eminence most Belgians have seen. I can realize their horror at the first sight of the Coffer of Perote, and the agony with which they must have threaded the dismal defiles of the Cumbres.

I told you that the resident French emigrants—those who have found Paris too dear for people with moderate means to dwell in—look with an evil eye upon the luxurious, opulent, and prodigal strangers who have fled from before the face of the cholera. They complain that these innovating persons are doing

their best to make Brussels as dear as Paris; that thirty per cent. has already been imposed on the lace and dry goods in the mercers' shops; that the cabmen are becoming extortionate; and that house-rents, saddle-horse hire, Bordeaux wine, and butchers' meat are all looking up. The slight inflation of prices caused by the cholera immigration cannot, however, last much longer. The Paris winter season is beginning; the Italiens are about to open. In another month the first masked ball will be given at the Grand Opéra. The Théâtre Français promises three new comedies before Christmas. The plates for the December issue of *Le Follet* and *La Mode* are nearly ready. Thérèse, they say, is rehearsing a new song, more ribald than its predecessors. The swallows must needs hasten back to their beloved Palais Royal and their cherished Rue Vivienne; and Brussels will revert to its legitimate occupants—the Bruxellois themselves and the people of moderate means, who shudder at the vision of the awful French "propriétaire," and the more awful "concierge."

There is the English colony, also, of the Quartier Leopold, who would be very glad to see the backs of the flighty denizens of the Paris boulevards. It is a wholesome and comfortable thing to behold the many doctors' shops where blue pill, Seidlitz powders, and taraxicum are displayed for British consumption: to see, snuggling in Belgian bookshops, highly-peppered controversial pamphlets about High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, and No Church; and to know

that you shall hardly travel a hundred yards without being able to purchase Singer's sewing machines, Balbriggan hose, family souchong, double Gloucester cheese, and Elizabeth Lazenby's sauce, without whose signature none is genuine. It is a grand and imposing sight to see Paterfamilias and Materfamilias, and all their olive branches, in scarlet stockings and Balmoral boots, and pork-pie hats and knickerbockers—I allude herein to the male olive branches—majestically descending the Montagne de la Cour to be photographed in a family manner at M. Mitkewitz's; to buy Brussels lace, thinking it cheap, and find it much dearer than it is in London; and to cheapen *mouille bouche* pears in the Marché de la Madeleine. I don't think the English colony care much about the cholera immigration, and that they are rather horrified than otherwise by the invasion of the streets of Brussels by young ladies with monstrous top-knots, with hats shaped like Grecian helmets, or like those of jockeys about to start for the Chester Cup, and like Phrygian bonnets—with "round tires like the moon"—with petticoats that are all the colours of the rainbow, and of many hues not to be found in that prism—with indelicate poodles, which bite and bark at the wheezy, lazy English lap-dogs—and who finally seem to be of opinion that, if a lady must paint her face, she may as well do it in the daytime as at night.

And then there is the third class of exiles, Frenchmen mostly, who are not afraid of the cholera, who are

not afraid of high rents and dear dinners—they are accustomed to live frugally, and to live near the sky—who would dearly like to go back to Paris, and to make some little governmental changes there which would slightly astonish the Parisians; *but who can't go back.* To return means tradition before the Police Correctionnelle. To return means the court of assize. To return means Mazas. To return means Cayenne. The "Young Republic" languishes in Brussels. You may buy "Napoléon le Petit" and "Les Châtiments," "Les Propos de Labienus" and "Pauvre Français," and a crowd of fouler libels still, accusing the Imperial family of France of all the crimes Blackstone and Beccaria ever dreamt of, on the bookstalls. Infamous caricatures of the ruler of France lurk at street corners. The "Young Republic" has its newspaper, and *La Rive Gauche,* published here weekly, has, I presume, its readers. Poor "Young Republicans!" Some of them are men of the Forty-eight, and grey-headed. They have lost all—fortune, career, hopes, everything. The Belgian Government grants them an asylum; yet, from the tone of even the most liberal newspapers, I cannot help fancying that the Bruxellois would not be very much grieved if the Young Republicans went somewhere else. They are a very compromising set of people, there can be no doubt; and the Belgic lion, peaceable, rate-and-tax-paying animal as he is, feels rather uncomfortable sometimes at the close propinquity of the Lion of the Latin Quarter.

CHAPTER III.

BELGIAN DOGS AND BELGIAN POLITICS—THE PARTY CANINE AND THE PARTY FELINE.

THE city of Alexandria in Egypt I have heard described by an American as "powerful at fleas." A kindred observer would, I apprehend, pronounce Brussels in Brabant to be "death on dogs." I never saw such a place for dogs in the whole course of my life. They swarm. They are of high and low degree. There are dogs with tails and dogs without; dogs that carry the head high, and are proud of their breeding; dogs that have no breeding at all, and behave accordingly: that is to say, in many cases much better than their betters. As strolling about Niagara, whether on the British or the American side of the river, you shall hardly take any path or turn any corner without finding that the Falls make up a part of the perspective, immediate or remote; so in Brussels, go where you will, saunter through the upper or the lower town, you shall scarcely cast your glance abroad in any direction but it shall light in the foreground, or the background, or the middle distance, upon a dog. At the hotel tables d'hôte the ladies bring dogs down to dinner with them, and

defraud the landlord by supplying their pets with eleemosynary board. If you walk into a pastrycook's to lunch, or into a café to smoke, some cur in quest of fortune is pretty sure to follow you. If you give him anything, he wags his tail; if the waiter kicks him out, he wags his tail also, and tries another establishment. Nay, in this country the dogs are devout, and go to church—at least, it is with great difficulty that they are kept out of the churches. To say nothing of the indecorum of these unclean animals assisting at divine worship, there is obvious inconvenience in the interruption of a prayer by canine yelpings—and to make a dog howl, try him with Sebastian Bach; the recipe is infallible: so, to abrogate these scandals, you see on the church doors this terse monition in Flemish—"*Honden uyt Godt's Tempel:* Dogs out of God's house." I am puzzled to know whether there are attached to the ecclesiastical fabrics in the Low Countries any functionaries whose duty it is, like that of the sexton's in mediæval England, to "whippe strae dogges oute of ye churche," or whether the "*Honden uyt*" is a direct appeal on the part of the authorities to the better feelings of the dogs themselves, in the hope that they will at once see the impropriety of attending matins and vespers, and begone, carrying their tails behind them.

But all the dogs in Brussels are not pets, or rovers of a fighting turn. As I have already mentioned, the Flemings use them—and to a very large extent—as beasts of draught and burthen. The milkwomen, the

laundresses, the costermongers, the people who sell crockeryware, or hawk firewood and brooms about, all have carts drawn by dogs—powerful animals of a semi-mastiff breed, broad-chested, black muzzled, and to all appearance wonderfully docile and intelligent. They are well broken to harness, want no holding while the proprietor goes into a shop to transact business—in which they have a manifest advantage over horses—and never, so far as my inquiries have extended, bolt. The question is, to those who love dogs: Is it cruel to use them so? In doubt about most things, I confess that on this head I shrink from dogmatism.

I remember when in Algiers going to a cockfight with a wise and humane English physician. He pointed out to me that which was plain enough—that no steps were taken to provoke the birds to combat or egg them on; the spectators were almost exclusively sententious Spaniards, who never uttered a word during the proceedings, save to bet. He pointed out, that which was evident enough, *that the birds liked fighting;* that they began to fight so soon as they were put into the pit; that they fought till their feathers flew, till one was killed and the other at death's door. Yet the English law has very properly considered cockfighting to be a wicked and cruel sport, and has forbidden its pursuit under heavy penalties: and at about the time that I was witnessing these quiet mains in Africa, a number of noblemen and gentlemen were being fined so many pounds a head for assisting at a cockfight at Jemmy

Shaw's in London. It is necessary to state that the Spaniards fight their birds without artificial spurs. Now dog-fighting—that is to say, the deliberate training and incitement of dogs to worry one another—is clearly barbarous and wicked; for the dog is an intelligent animal, who, in nine cases out of ten, will only fight when he has a genuine grievance. But is it cruel and wicked to make dogs draw carts? The law of England says it is; yet you may see many dogs in London, and at large, much stronger and hardier looking than the poor meek little donkeys that are harnessed to the costermongers' barrows, and most shamefully overladen and overdriven in our civilised and philanthropic metropolis. Yes; and I think I would sooner be a dog in a Belgian milkwoman's cart than a night cab-horse in the Haymarket, or an organ-grinder's monkey, or a thorough-bred, satin-skinned, high-mettled, five hundred guinea steeplechase "crack." I think that I should not work so hard, and I am sure that I should suffer much less actual bodily torture.

To judge from their looks, the Belgian cart-dogs are very well fed; and if the voices and gestures of their masters and mistresses be a criterion of their treatment, it is kind, and even affectionate. Very rarely does the driver carry a whip—indeed, there is no driving, properly so called; the dog seems to know perfectly well when to stop and when to go on in his accustomed round; and the proprietor trudges behind, literally putting his shoulder to the wheel when the way is steep,

and giving the vehicle an amicable shove from behind. There are carts drawn by as many as three dogs; and there are few things pleasanter than, when business is slack, to see the proprietor unharness his dogs, and allow them a quarter of an hour's gambol and frolic. It reminds you of the "all hands for skylarking!" command one used to read of in the old stories of man-o'-war discipline. The dogs enjoy their skylarking to the very fullest; racing and frisking, and barking, and tumbling over one another in sheer ecstasy of enjoyment till the word comes for them to be tethered up again and go to work. And who, man or beast, has not to go through that tethering up process, and does not enjoy his occasional skylark all the better for it? The peril, of course, is lest the dogs get into the hands of brutes or boys; both equally devoid of mercy. Human beings are overtasked and overworked savagely enough; but they can complain, resist, and, if need be, revolt. The dogs are dumb, and remonstrance is beyond them; and this is the validest argument for condemning strong, hardy, and willing animals to a life of useless idleness. You complain that Newfoundland dogs are short-sighted and stupid. It is only because they have nothing to do. Turn them over to the good monks of St. Bernard, and they would be speedily found keen-sighted and quick-witted enough. In England not one big dog in five hundred earns his livelihood.

Philanthropy, always restless—and it is good for the world that it should know no rest, for by resting

too long it rusts—has started imitations of our Prevention Society abroad; the employment of dogs in drawing carts has been denounced as an intolerable evil, and, ere long, perhaps, the Belgian Legislature may put the practice down. Meanwhile the philanthropists are trying to bring competition to bear on the market by the importation, by way of Antwerp, of ponies from Iceland; wiry, strong-limbed little animals, not much bigger than the dogs, but inconceivably stubborn, spiteful, and intractable. They say it takes five thousand blows of a stick to convert a Russian peasant into a grenadier, and eight thousand to make a dragoon of him. I should say that to make an Iceland pony move five yards, a proportionate amount of cudgelling and a proportionate number of kicks in the ribs must be necessary. They are obliged to bit him most cruelly, else he will bite; and to hobble and swing him, as they do mules, when he is shod; and if he be not traced up very tight indeed between very strong shafts, and behind very big wheels, like the immortal cab-horse which conveyed Mr. Pickwick to the Golden Cross, Charing-cross, your Icelander will lie down and grovel in the dust like the Shetland pony I saw at the Cirque Renz.

Belgian dogs may be taken, without straining, as salient types of one phase of Belgian manners; but what can they have to do, it may be asked, with Belgian politics? Without wishing to beg the question, if you will only grant the existence of numerous grave and

majestic gibcats in Brussels—creatures which, with flowing grey whiskers, and large, calm green eyes, sit placidly surveying the great raree-show at the house doors and in the shop windows—the connexion I wish to establish will be at once apparent. In a party canine and a party feline may be summed up the entire aspect of existing Belgian politics. They lead a cat-and-dog life. The Liberals are the dogs, robust, active, loud-mouthed, deep-chested, pugnacious, and it must be admitted somewhat boisterous and aggressive. The Clerical party are the cats: quiet, sly, tenacious, loving much to sit in the sunshine with their eyes blinking at the canary bird in his cage at the window opposite, but ever ready for a spring, a pounce, and a tearing to pieces divertissement.

On really political questions these good people are, although they are unconscious of the fact, nearly unanimous. Leopold I. was as honest a king as ever lived—who broke no pledge, who told no lie, who used his vast influence to serve no base or selfish end; who loyally wore his elective crown, and only begged his subjects when, smitten by the French scarlet fever, they grumbled a little in 1848, not to be at the pains of raising barricades and making a revolution, for, if they were tired of him, he would pack up his trunks and be off to Claremont at once. They have obtained that most inestimable boon, constitutional liberty; a boon prized quite as much, I am inclined to think, by Clericals as by Liberals. They are fully represented,

and not too heavily taxed. If not congested with wealth, as we are, their thriftiness and industry, and the productiveness of their country in grain, in coal, and in iron, enable them to live in a state of comfort which approaches opulence. They have the right of association and of public speech, and the police is wholly municipal and independent of Government control. They have entire freedom of the press, and I question whether in any city in the world, with the exception of New York, so many seditious libels are published every day as in Brussels. The aggregate circulation of the metropolitan journals—whose name is legion—including their country *abonnés*, is said to exceed one hundred thousand per diem. Finally, both Clericals and Liberals are imbued to the same extent with chronic terror of the only real danger which menaces this fat, frugal, and eminently happy country —that of being, in some earthquake of European politics, gobbled up by their neighbours the French.

"Without Antwerp and the boundary of the Rhine, France," said Napoleon I., "is powerless." The Belgians are continually and uneasily repeating these ominous words, forgetting, however, that they were uttered by the French Emperor when his mind was full of an England peopled only by Castlereaghs and Orders in Council. The First Napoleon thought that by holding Antwerp he could stop the mouth of the Thames. The third Napoleon has quietly steamed up to the very Pool, and invaded the heart of England through the

Custom House, his peaceful legions paying duty under the amended tariff of the treaty of commerce.

Mankind, however, must have something to quarrel about. According to the Neapolitan preacher, the very beatified in Paradise fell out because the Spanish saints smoked so many cigars. The Belgians, being prosperous and free, have agreed to fight tooth and nail about religion. It is no question here of Catholic against Protestant, orthodox against heterodox, High Church against Evangelical, Established Church against Dissenter. The Clericals or Catholics boldly claim for themselves the exclusive title of "Christians," and it is said, indeed—I know not with what truth—that the vast majority of the educated persons who attend the Roman Catholic churches in this country are members of the "Clerical" party. Their adversaries—the Liberals—they stigmatise, without much beating about the bush, as atheists. "Josephists," "Voltairians," "*Libre-penseurs*," "Hegelianists," "Solidaires," "Doctrinaires," and "*Esprits forts*," are the terms made use of by the Clerical prints when they wish to be polite; but polemics are not long continued before the supreme accusation of atheism is thundered out. The Liberals who are suspected of Republicanism are styled "Terrorists" and "*Buveurs de Sang*." The frothy little *Rive Gauche* is compared to the "*Bouche de Fer*," and the "*Père Duchêne*;" and scarcely a day passes without a hint to one or another minister or representative of the Liberal party in the columns of the clerical press

that he does not believe in God; that the chosen desires of his heart are incest, adultery, blasphemy, fraud, and rapine; and that he is irrevocably doomed to eternal torment. The mutual amenities of our *Records*, and *Weekly Registers*, and *Church Times*, are milk-and-watery by the side of the fierce philippics launched forth by papers whose titles glow with the biggest of crosses and *Agnus Deis*.

On their side, the Liberals are not behindhand in the retort courteous, in the reproof positive, and in the lie direct. They speak of the Catholics as of so many hypocrites, impostors, robbers, and profligates. Cases of immorality among the inferior clergy—especially those of the semi-monastic orders engaged in the education of the poor—are, unfortunately, far from rare in Belgium. Whenever one of these cases occurs, it is greedily seized upon by the Liberal press, and *entremets* abound, headed "Another Frère Léotade," "The case of La Cadière over again," "A new Urbain Grandier," and the like.

The newspaper war now raging on the question of the exclusion of clerical superintendence from the schools endowed by the State is almost incredibly virulent. The Liberals wish public instruction to be of a wholly secular nature; in short, they would assimilate the schools of Belgium to the common schools of the United States. The Clericals declare that the priest should be the constant associate, guide, and supervisor of the schoolmaster; and that, in the

words of Cardinal Donnet, "although the church is not a school, the school is the porch of the church." The Clericals point to Lutheran Prussia and Anglican England as examples that even in countries owning the sway of the Reformed Religion the clergyman has his legitimate share in the direction of public education. The Liberals reply that English and Prussian schools would be much better conducted if the clergy had nothing at all to do with them. A Liberal Administration has now been in power for eight years, and strenuous efforts are unceasingly made by the advanced section of the Liberal party to procure the passing of measures still further secularising the educational establishments of the country. The Liberals would abolish the monastic orders which, almost extinct in 1830, have since experienced a surprising increase; and they are desirous of applying a portion of the revenues vested in the Catholic colleges and charitable foundations to secular purposes. Anything surpassing the acrimony, the violence, and the indecency of the controversy between the two parties, it is difficult to conceive. Both fling mud with equal liberality; and the supply of ordure seems inexhaustible.

In the Chambers a Catholic representative attacks a Liberal minister on the ground of his having called the Church a "boutique." The minister denies the charge, but hints that the Church in Belgium, as it is at present governed, is not much better than a shop; and then a witty apologist of the incriminated minister observes

that if it be not a "boutique," it has, at least, a fabrique attached to it—a joke which I leave ecclesiologists to laugh at. As though the cloud of newspapers were not sufficient to carry on the war, the press groans every week with pamphlets, Liberal and Clerical. *Le Prêtre hors de l'Ecole* replies to *La Prêtraille*, the "*Defense des Droits de Dieu*" scrunches up the "*Clergé au Pilori*," and *le bon Catholique* throws vitriol in the eyes of "*le disciple de Philon de Judée.*" Brussels is an ecclesiastical Eatanswill, and Mr. Pott in a shovel hat and cassock would murder if he could Mr. Sleek in a wideawake hat and moustaches.

Thus do these little people fight and scream, and, like dogs, delight to bark and bite, and spume forth their venom day after day while the great round world rolls in its appointed manner, and the sun rises and sets with accustomed regularity, and the seasons come and go, and from the stars, it may be, a superior race look down and smile at the antics and capers of Clericals and Liberals. Fortunately there is as yet no cause for weeping. There is no dread of bloodshed. Nobody has yet been wounded—nobody has been hurt, save with quill or steel pen. Nothing worse than ink has been spilt in the conflict; and while they rage and storm, and the *odium theologicum* grows thick and fermenting, like the witches' gruel, the general public seem to take things very easily, and eat and drink and make merry, as though no clerical sharpers were driving their trade in God's house—as though no brimstone and burning

brands were being prepared for "Josephists" and "Hegelianists." The streets are thronged; the theatres are crammed; the hotels are turning away guests; the precious wares in the jewellers' shops of the Montagne de la Cour glance and glisten; the grand old tower of the Town House rears its head as proudly as ever, and, in the Rue de l'Etuve hard by, the little Mannchen—*le plus ancien bourgeois de Bruxelles*—the guardian genius of the city, wears his gala suits upon his holidays, draws his dividends, pays the wages of his *valet de chambre*, and, smiling at the petty ways of men, fulfils his harmless mission. He is perpetual. Wars cannot slay him. Revolutions are powerless to quench his eternal youth. Men may come, and men may go; but the Mannchen runs on for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

ANTWERP—ITS FORTIFICATIONS—THE CATHEDRAL AND ITS MASTERPIECES.

I HOPE the Antwerpers—who seem jovial burghers enough, and as fond as ever of painting, processions, musical performances, and good company—will not be angry with me for hinting that their fine old city strikes a stranger as being slightly too large for its population, and too strong for itself. The place puts you in mind of a hundred-and-twenty-gun ship, fully armed, rigged, and victualled, but insufficiently manned. Captain and first lieutenant, doctor and purser, boatswain and master-at-arms, all are there; the nettings are full of hammocks, and the magazines of shot and shell; but tars enough don't tumble up the hatchway when "all hands" are piped, and the muster on the main deck is but meagre. There is a large garrison, I am told, in Antwerp; but the military element in the population is, to the visual sense, by no means overpowering. There is a fair amount of shipping in the port, or moored alongside the Vandyck and Jordaens Quays, and Jack, they say, is alive in Antwerp late at night to a highly appreciable extent; still the

bustle at the water-side, for a seaport town, is but slight. It certainly does not seem so great as it is at Havre or at Havana. Maritime Antwerp more nearly resembles Bristol. It has a flavour of the "has beens." The present is highly respectable, but the past must have been glorious. It is obvious that I may be told that mid-November is the wrong time of year for visiting Antwerp. It is a season when, as a rule, there is nobody nowhere—when London seems as deserted as the continent, and the town as empty as the country, and you begin to believe in the existence of a numerous race of human moles and dormice who snooze away the dull period to Christmas. There are very few tourists here; the arrival of steamers is less frequent, of sailing vessels rarer still; and the commercial activity of the port, considerable during spring and summer, is enwrapped in the proper autumnal lethargy. But this, I am afraid, is not the real trouble with Antwerp. I go back to my first position—that the city is too big for its population, and too strong for itself.

Murray's "Guide Book" says that the inhabitants of the picturesque old town once numbered two hundred thousand. At the end of the sixteenth century, when it was at the height of its splendour and prosperity, and was, indeed, the rival of Venice as a commercial emporium, it is said to have contained that respectable number; but the modern figure is given at the degenerate amount of 102,000 and odd. The living

Antwerpers are in a rage at this assertion on the part of the usually accurate scribe of Albemarle-street, and stoutly declare that the statistics collected by their Communal Council prove them to have an aggregate of one hundred and ten thousand. It would avail little to say them nay—not any three persons ever agree as to the population of even the most scrupulously Registrar-generalled cities; but it is certain that, to a casual observer, Antwerp looks big enough, not alone for two, but for three hundred thousand souls. It is the roomiest city I have seen. The population of a German grand duchy might be put into the Place Verte without packing. The Place de Meir is much wider than the Strand at Somerset House, and a great deal handsomer. Besides these, Antwerp abounds in open spaces, which appear to have been considerately erected by mediæval architects with a special view towards facilitating popular assemblages, seditions, and revolts. The streets leading to these commodious areas are narrow and tortuous. What could have been more natural than for the people, penned up in dark lanes and blind alleys, to flock forth into the open, to grumble, pelt the city watch, and cry out for the blood of the burgomaster? And what would the Duke of Alva, at Brussels and elsewhere, have done without plenty of public places in which to burn heretics and massacre mobs?

The places, however, are now too large for the people; and the inscription "S.P.Q.A."—*Senatus populus que Antverpæ*—on all the public buildings and

monuments, even on the modern one erected in honour of Rubens, has rather a smack of the self-important exordium of the three tailors of Tooley-street, "We, the people of England." Again, the churches are too numerous and too spacious for the worshippers. Besides the magnificent Cathedral of Notre Dame, the churches of St. Paul, St. Jaques, St. Charles Borromeo, and a score more, are grand enough to put many English minsters to shame; but they are rarely crowded, save on Sunday at high mass. You may count by dozens the confessional boxes, richly carved, with wooden figures as large as life—emblematic of Penitence, and Silence, and Secrecy, I presume—keeping guard at their portals; but the penitents whom I saw, either male, or female, ensconcing their heads into apertures, like photographic operators diving into the recesses of the camera, were very few. Perhaps I went at the wrong time, and when the reverend father confessor was not *en boîte;* but I was informed that even the class who are devotees all over the world, the ladies, did not much affect the large churches; preferring to flock to the convent chapels, where certain Capucin monks and Jesuits are just now driving a business as preachers of which Mr. Spurgeon might be envious, to the infinite disgust of the secular clergy. For "clericals" as they are, the seculars have an intense dislike of the monks, who draw custom and profit away from the old-fashioned shop, and resort to the untradesmanlike artifice of saying that it is the same concern.

The depopulated aspect of a city whose denizens, in spite of Murray, may very probably exceed one hundred thousand, may, perhaps, be ascribed to the absence of one long main street. There needs a thorough draught to be driven through Antwerp—one channel through which the tide of humanity may flow full and strong. As it is, the stream dribbles along countless narrow thoroughfares, between stacks of tall old houses, and meanders into the numerous open spaces, where the people collect in pools and stagnate. In the Place Verte, the Place de Meir, the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, and many others, you shall scarcely fail to mark group after group of stationary loafers—thin groups, widely scattered, who smoke and gape, and gape and smoke, all day long, and stare up at Rubens's statue, or Quentin Matsys's fountain, or the Cathedral spire, as if they had never before seen those edifices, though they have been familiar with them since they were babies. I passed one shabby little old man in a leathern cap and a threadbare velveteen waistcoat, who was leaning, with his hands in his pockets, against the Gothic fountain, and was very anxious to take me to the Museum in order that I might see the original tablet engraved in honour of the painter-blacksmith—*(Connubialis amor de Mulciber fecit? Appellem.)* This was about noon. I passed again an hour afterwards. The little old man was still there, his hands still in his pockets. He was by this time slightly fresh, and his inquiries as to whether he should conduct me to the summit of the

Cathedral spire were somewhat incoherent. I declined his proffered services, and went for a little walk. When I came back, about dinner time, the little old man, his hands still in his pockets, was quite tipsy, and the odour of schnapps hung around him like a chasuble. He simply murmured, "Show Salle des Mariages, Hôtel de Ville?" grinned, and stared into vacancy as though he were absorbed in the contemplation of Buddha. It was only Blue Ruin. Now, how did this little old man get tight? Had he made periodical rushes to the various gin-shops which radiate from any given centre in Antwerp like the spokes in a wheel, or was he waited upon from time to time by friends, who brought him noggins of liquor to cheer him up, till the long-waited-for tourist should come to be conducted to the Museum or the top of Notre Dame's gigantic tower?

As a rule, everybody in Antwerp has something to show, and expects money for showing it. None of the good pictures in the churches are to be seen under a franc. The worthless ones are exhibited gratuitously, and you may deprave your eye for nothing. Keepers of old curiosity shops fill back rooms with *bric-à-brac.* and you are told that it is essential to see the "private collection" of Monsieur or Madame So-and-So. There is always a servant in waiting at these "private" collections, with a "franc" expression of countenance. The natives nose a foreigner at once; and as you walk, or drive about in a cab, especially if you have a lady with

you, you will be agreeably surprised to find many hats taken off to you on the part of entire strangers. At first you set the salutation down to Antwerpian politeness, but you speedily discover that most of these courteous gentry have something to sell. This commercial travelling in the streets is curious, and reminds one of the "dry goods drummers" of New York. I was waited upon lately by a very handsome and aristocratically-attired gentleman, who, presenting a highly-glazed card, informed me in faultless English, that it was his pride and pleasure—these were his words—to conduct the nobility and the gentry to the Hague, officiating there as courier and interpreter, guide, philosopher, and friend. I informed him that I proposed to conduct myself to the Hague; wherewith, after an ineffectual endeavour to sell me, first some photographs of the Descent and the Elevation, and next some scented soap, he departed with a bow quite Castilian in its graceful gravity, which I fancy had been traditionally transmitted to him from the time of the old Spanish rule here. The hotel waiters, who all speak English, are most civil and obliging; but during the first few hours of your stay they always seem to have something on their minds. Gradually they unbosom themselves. If you are a lady, they whisper that they possess some exquisite eau de Cologne; if you are of the ruder sex, they bring you a box of cigars on trial—the choicest Havanas, of course. Nobody else has such eau de Cologne, or such Regalias—they are the sole

agents. They must be all first cousins to Jean Marie Farina, or related on the mother's side to Anselmo del Valle, *hijo de Cabanas y Carvajal.*

The Exchange at Antwerp—or rather that which used to be the Exchange—partakes of the general and superfluous vastness of the city. You suddenly stumble, after wandering about a labyrinth of devious lanes, into an enormous palace of coloured brick, with an inner courtyard and a double range of cloisters, with arches supported on slender columns, which the guide-books call "florid Gothic," but which are in reality Moresque. The *Beurs,* at Antwerp, which dates from the middle of the sixteenth century, and bears in every line the Spanish impress, is, indeed, as Moorish as the Court of Lions in the Alhambra: and the Spanish house, with its *patio* and galleries is nothing but the Moorish house with its inner court and cloisters. This beautiful building, which Sir Thomas Gresham selected as a model for London's first Exchange, is now only a ruined shell. A huge conflagration broke out within its walls in 1859, and in a few hours it was completely gutted. The outer walls, however, bore the fire bravely, and the exquisitely arched portals and colonnades are still perfect. The Antwerpers persist in ascribing the destruction of an edifice of which they were all so proud, to an enormous glass roof, with which the courtyard, for centuries open to the sky, had recently been covered; indeed, there are dark and distant rumours that the irritation of outraged æsthetic taste culminated

in incendiarism, and that hostile critics, not content with blowing the glass roof up in print, burnt it down bodily. At present the merchants meet temporarily in a single room, and in summer in an open wooden shed on the Place Verte, behind the Rubens monument. The room and the shed are large enough for them now; but the old ruined Bourse seems capacious enough for all the merchants of Tyre and Sidon to have met in, and exchanged the latest quotations in myrrh and frankincense and purple robes dyed in grain, and regulated the market price of onyx and bdellium, pearls and fine gold.

Strange to say, although Antwerp is manifestly as over-roomy for the Antwerpers as a hackney coachman's upper-benjamin for a small boy of eight, they are working like beavers to make it bigger. As well might a spider in a corner of Westminster Hall declare that he wanted elbow-room, or a flea in the Great Bed of Ware complain of being cramped for space. The old fortifications have been found to circumscribe the city within too narrow limits. The most rational plan, perhaps, would have been to remove the fortifications altogether, and to allow Antwerp, if it was susceptible of growth, to grow for itself. The Belgian Government and people, however, have an idea that, *coûte qui coûte*, Antwerp, must be made a *place forte* and the stronghold of Flanders. In this opinion many of the Antwerpers are said not to concur. They have heard enough of sieges. The Duke of Parma invested

Antwerp for fourteen months in Queen Elizabeth's time. The French stormed it during the great Revolution. The English general Graham took it, after a four months' blockade, in 1814. Marshal Gerard bombarded it in 1832, and after knocking several of the beautiful pinnacles off the spire of Notre Dame, forced the Dutch General Chassé to yield Antwerp up. These experiences, the more sensible of the Antwerpers say, should be sufficient. The final cause of all fortresses—even the strongest—is to be taken. If any hostile general is to "sit down before" and invest any more Flemish strongholds, say the Antwerpers, let him sit down before Mons or Namur or Huy.

To re-fortify Antwerp is as though we proposed to fortify Liverpool. Half-a-dozen bastions would strangle all her docks. The Belgian Government and the Belgian public, however, have had their own way. The strengthening of the city of the Scheldt, it was thought in Belgium, would prove a wholesome warning to ill-disposed parties on the other side of the frontier. The French are never tired of telling you that Lille is in France; the Belgians were determined to show that Antwerp was in Belgium. So the old ramparts, on which the Duke of Alva's engineer, Pacciarotti, lavished all his talents, and the French general, Carnot, all his skill, are being demolished. The moats are being rapidly filled up, and new boulevards and new streets are to be erected on their site. A new citadel on the Scheldt is in course of construction, with any number

of detached forts; and a new *enceinte* of earthworks and ditches has been made, at a distance of three miles from the old circuit. They are very magnificent works to look at, with bombproof casemates, ponderous drawbridges, and numerous lofty gates of bright red brick, with ornaments and dressings of granite; and on their summits Belgic lions of colossal size in bronze, and in every stage of rampant rabies, are visible. For what general, I wonder, is it reserved to have the glory of knocking these gates and ramparts and rampant lions to pieces? Meanwhile, the glacis of the old fortifications forms a very pleasant promenade; and the wet ditches, when filled up and planted with trees, will make very nice boulevards. It is questionable whether this prodigious enlargement of the city circumference will bring back the halcyon days of its prosperity—the days when Antwerp was the richest town in Europe; when two thousand five hundred ships, laden with merchandize from every part of the world, lay at one time in the Scheldt; when an average of five hundred loaded waggons entered its gates every day; when five thousand merchants met twice a day on the Exchange, and the money annually put in circulation exceeded five hundred millions of guilders. This was in the time of Charles V. The historian who has handed down these statistics to us was probably a Spaniard, and an adept in the Spanish art of amplification.

I should advise all financial reformers, all sucking under-secretaries who hope to become Chancellors of

the Exchequer, and all rising politicians ambitious of some day demolishing the budgets of said Chancellors, to take a trip to Antwerp—put up at the clean and comfortable Hôtel de l'Europe, whose landlord, Mr. Barber, an Englishman, is eager to give every information to his travelling countrymen—and study the old and the new fortifications from an economical point of view. How much cash has been wasted here? How many Squanders of Castle Squander have made the guilders fly? Alva, with the Italian Pacciarotti to help him, must have spent a pretty penny. The Austrian governors and governesses of the Low Countries must have wasted millions in making Antwerp strong. Then came Napoleon, whose intensity of belief in Antwerp as a citadel, arsenal and naval station, amounted almost to an hallucination. He spent over two millions sterling in adding to the fortifications and scooping out dockyards and basins; and we English spent, perhaps, five millions more in trying to spoil what Napoleon had done, in the miserably blundering Walcheren expedition of 1809. Then Napoleon, with Carnot's assistance, went on spending his millions for five years longer; and in 1814, in accordance with the treaty of Paris, the dockyards were summarily demolished. The government of King Leopold, in pursuance, it must be admitted, of the popular wish, has spent, since 1859, three millions and a half sterling on the new fortifications. They are not half finished, and as much if not more money must

be spent before the detached forts and the "impregnable" citadel on the Scheldt can be completed. Perhaps by that time some new system of fortification or some new engine of destruction will have been invented, so that the work will have to be done and the money spent all over again. Well, I suppose the world must keep moving, and money must be spent somehow. Bess of Hardwicke did not know what to do with her riches, save to build palaces and castles with them; and in the next generation five per cent. of her fine houses were razed to the ground by Cromwell's ironsides. The Castle Squanders of Antwerp point a fine moral for all that. A copy of the statistics of expenditure there might be deposited in the garrison libraries of Cherbourg, Portsmouth, and Quebec, all impregnable fortresses, and all as pregnable as Ehrenbreitstein.

The engineers, however, may continue to improve on Pacciarotti and Vauban, and Cohorn and Carnot, and then find Todtleben or M'Clellan superior to them all; but in one respect Antwerp is not susceptible of amelioration. You can't improve on that marvellous Cathedral of Notre Dame, with its spire four hundred and three feet high, and so exquisitely delicate in its Gothic tracery as to surpass the encomia passed upon it by Charles V., who said it ought to be kept under a glass case, and by Napoleon, who compared it to a sample of Mechlin lace. The grand old structure, although its exterior walls are disfigured by excres-

cences in the shape of mean little shops and houses, is still as to its interior in admirable preservation. The French revolutionists defaced a good many of the monuments; broke open all the tombs, both here and in the other churches—with the single exception of Rubens's in St. Jacques, which, in odd intermittence of sacrilege, they sentimentally spared, as they had done that of Turenne at St. Denis; and stole, according to their custom, all the gold and silver ornaments and precious stones on which they could lay hands. But they could not carry away the noble oak carvings—the sumptuous rood-loft, and chancel screen; and the stained-glass windows which they smashed have been replaced. It must make the Dean and Chapter rather sad and rather savage to see the huge swinging cressets and censers made of copper where once they were of silver, to know that the candlesticks on the high altar are only plated, and the great railing round it of brass: the Republican gentlemen carefully removed the genuine articles; but at least the Chapter got their Rubenses back.

Napoleon, at St. Helena, used often to express his astonishment at the moderation of the English, who, after spending so many hundreds of millions in conquering him, gained nothing under the treaties of 1815 but glory, a swollen national debt, and the Ionian islands. We have got rid of the last; the other two incumbrances remain. When the Louvre was stripped of its artistic spoils, however, the Duke of Wellington

had something to say. As *amicus curiæ* of the Prince of Orange, he claimed the art treasures plundered from Holland and Belgium; and through his instrumentality the Rembrandts, Ostades, and Paul Potters went back to the Hague and Amsterdam, and the Rubenses and Vandycks to Antwerp. The Cathedral of Notre Dame once more revelled in its three masterpieces—the Descent from the Cross, the Elevation of the Cross, in the north and south transepts, and the Assumption of the Virgin, over the high altar, all by the first-named master.

They say that the Cathedral is the poorest of all the churches in Antwerp. The Chapter make up for their paucity of funds by exhibiting, in a very shameless manner, their masterpieces at so much a head. During the hours of Divine service dirty curtains are drawn before the sumptuous works, which are not only monuments of human genius, but are illustrative of the most awful mysteries of the Christian religion. The poorer classes go to worship in the Cathedral in the morning. Until one o'clock P.M. they are not permitted to gaze upon the representations of the agonies and entombment of the Founder of their Faith, or the ascension to heaven of the Virgin Mary. The sight of those works is reserved for tourists and sight-seers, mostly arch-heretics from the United Kingdom, who pay a france a-piece for the privilege. There is a reduction in taking a quantity. A party of two only pay a franc and a half. The church is jealously locked up. You have to go to a money-taker's box and purchase your

ticket; and then the janitor comes out with a huge bunch of keys and admits you to the show. I say, deliberately, that it *is* a show; and that the little bills and placards in the porch about plenary indulgences "*Sint Peter's Genootschap*"—a begging-box association for praying for the conversion of Voltairians and collecting Peter's pence—look exactly like the playbills and programmes of the "Nationale Schouwburg" and the Cirque Renz.

I beg to state that this is not written in the interest of the Protestant Alliance. I have paid twopence in my time to go over St. Paul's (the entire show, ball, cross, and all, used to cost three-and-sixpence); and sixpence to see Westminster Abbey, and the tomb of the maid of honour who pricked her finger when sewing on a Sunday, and died of it; and only a short time since, as I told you, at Canterbury, I disbursed eighteenpence to the pretty little beefsteak-pudding-eating verger's daughter to see Edward the Black Prince's hauberk and gauntlets, and the spot where the shrine of Thomas à Becket exists no longer. And I should be very much obliged if you could inform me of the existence at any time of any sacred edifice, Pagan, Catholic, or Protestant, in which the priests, so soon as they had got the altar comfortably established, did not set up the tables of the money-changers in the aisles.

I don't say that the Descent and the Elevation, and the Assumption, in Notre Dame are not worth more than the money you pay for seeing them; there is a

priceless Resurrection here,' too, by Rubens. In St. Jacques, Rubens' tomb, Vervoort's carved Elevation, and Vandyck's Ecstacy of St. Augustine, are fully worth the additional franc you are called upon to pay. Nor would the sight of that awfully magnificent picture of "The Scourging" by Rubens, in St. Paul's, be dear at twice ten francs. But you grow weary and disgusted at last with the clamours for franc after franc —with the boxes and brass basins thrust under your nose at every turn for donations to this or that brotherhood, or sisterhood, or *œuvre pieuse*—with the monotonous sing-song of the guide, and the harpy looks of the sacristans. The police have driven away the professional beggars from the church gates, fearing, perhaps, their competition with the other beggars in cassocks inside; but you feel that it would be a positive relief to fling a handful of coppers into the hat of some blind or lame or ragged losel—at all events, Lazarus doesn't draw a curtain before his sores, or let out his wooden leg on hire, from one to four P.M.

I do not propose to weary the reader with dissertations, either borrowed or original, upon the works of art to be found in the churches at Antwerp. It is not that some succinct and appreciative handbook of criticism on these wonderful pictures would be unserviceable. On the contrary, I think that such a work is very much needed, and would be a very great boon both to travellers abroad and to art-students at home. The guide books, in default of any modern English writer of repute

on the Flemish school, fall back to Dr. Waagen—who, it may be observed parenthetically, ought to know something about Flemish pictures, for he was a private soldier in the Prussian army of occupation in Paris when the Louvre had to disgorge its prey, but who is often offensively prejudiced and dogmatical. Or, for a change, they give you extracts from Kugler, a very accurate, worthy man, but hopelessly Dryasdustic and obscure; while, for a second course, they have always good old Sir Joshua Reynolds as a standing dish. After reading Sir Joshua on the Elevation and the Descent, one is fain to believe that Johnson or Burke must have helped him materially in the composition of his Discourses, which are replete with thought, scholarship, and eloquence; while his notices on the Flemish school of painting are tame, commonplace, and often grossly incorrect. Moreover, some account, by an expert, is needed of the actual state of the pictures. Sir Joshua may be respectable; but in any case he is out of date. Since his time (1781) the masterpieces have travelled, and French, German, and Belgian "restorers" and picture-vampers have worked their wicked will with them. Some have been clumsily varnished, and the varnish has "bloomed" or mildewed, or become cracked or furred. Many portions of the most capital works have obviously been obliterated, and repainted by daubers. In the great altar-piece of the Assumption by Rubens in the Cathedral, the blue tints, of which the master has made in this instance such

liberal use, have either "flown," to use a technical expression, or the picture has been scrubbed raw by blundering restorers. The pictures of secondary merit —those of Floris, Quentin Matsys, Frank, Jordaens, Teniers the elder, and De Vos—have not suffered quite so much; but enough injury has been done them, with the connivance of the priests, to make the lover of art indulge in a fervent wish, either that they had all remained in the Louvre, or that the Belgian Government could suspend its constitutionalism for a week, and, with merciful despotism, take all these peerless pictures out of the hands of the ecclesiastical showmen, and place them under proper custody in a national museum.

CHAPTER V.

SOME OF THE LIONS OF ANTWERP—THE WORKS OF RUBENS —"CALVARY."—THE MUSEUM OF PAINTINGS.

I HAVE been travelling for nearly twenty years, but, with the exception of a swarthy person in Venice, by whom I was once seduced into being led about, dancing-bear fashion, through the prisons and the picture-rooms of the Ducal Palace, I don't think that, until the journey I am now engaged upon, I have ever wittingly availed myself of the services of a professional guide, *cicerone*, or *valet de place:* which is a tacit confession of non-affiliation to the Alpine Club. Were I a member of that amateur Ramoneur Association, I should of course esteem the guides of Chamouni and Zermatt as among my dearest friends, next to my alpenstock. I saw a lady the other day at Calais with an alpenstock, the which struck me as being about as much in place as a puggree at Jersey in November. The middle-aged clergymen, juvenile barristers, and ninnies generally, afflicted with the Excelsiorist mania, are nothing without their guides. The Balmats and Grosnez are to them as gyps or Temple laundresses, reviled yet cherished by their employers. It is a very

old and a very sorry jest to say that Switzerland, in the winter, is a table-land as flat as Holland or as a pancake, and that the peaks, passes, and glaciers, with châlets and hotels at their bases, are all run up by speculators for the summer season, as though they were set scenes at the opera; yet it is not easy to avoid the impression that guides are a special race created for the special benefit of members of the two Universities and the Inns of Court; and that if the "University extension," about which there has been so much talking lately, ever comes to pass, there will be a corresponding increase in the families of those hardy mountaineers or less picturesque lowlanders who are to be "heard of" in the purlieus of continental hotels, and whose services may be secured for five francs a day—an extra charge being made for the ascension of Mont Blanc or the spire of Strasburg cathedral.

"He that travelleth into a country," says Lord Bacon, "before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel." Having failed to effect the slightest entrance into the Dutch or Flemish tongues, I have lately been constrained to avail myself of the instructions of a schoolmaster. It is a humiliating thing to confess that for the last fortnight I have been in the hands of the Low Dutch *commissionnaire*—the title of the guide here—as clay in the hands of the potter. I fought him off, with churlish words and an umbrella, as long as I could; but he continued to open fresh lines of courteous trenches round

me, and at last, making a practicable breach, stormed the citadel of my *porte-monnaie,* and captured it easily. There must be a kind of freemasonry among *commissionnaires.* I am afraid the circumstance of my having taken a guide to Waterloo must have flown about, with chupatty and lotos-flower secrecy and celerity, among the tribe. I ought properly to have explored the field alone, mistaken Hougoumont for La Belle Alliance, and missed the mountain of the Belgic Lion altogether. It would have been all the same in the long run. At all events, I had no sooner "descended" at the hotel in the Place Verte at Antwerp than I became a facile prey to the *commissionnaire.* He had paid the cabman who brought me from the railway station before I had made up my mind whether I ought to give that charioteer one franc eighty, or two francs ten. This was a master stroke of policy. Then, by a flying sap, he came close under my walls; and I had engaged a room and a *commissionnaire* before I knew exactly where I was.

Advantages and disadvantages, satisfaction and misery, are balanced with tolerable equality by the engagement of a *commissionaire.* It is true that he bestrides you like an Old Man of the Sea; that he worries your life out; that you have to walk at his pace, stop when he stops, see with his eyes, and listen—as unwillingly as did the wedding guest in "The Ancient Mariner"—to his infernal drone, half conned poll-parrot-like from the guide-books, half evolved from his own internal consciousness of dull commonplace. It is.

true that you very soon become aware that he apportions *your* time in order that it may accord with *his* dinner hour, and his afternoon custom of dropping in at the beershop, or smoking the domestic pipe, or playing skittles. It is true that ere long you begin to suspect him to be in league with every innkeeper, sacristan, concierge, box-keeper, and curiosity shop-keeper in the town; that he irritates you almost to madness by telling you trivial things which you have known ever since you were a child; that his officiousness in proposing to hold your eyeglass case, or lick the postage stamp you are about to affix to a letter, annoys instead of conciliating you; and that at least ten times a day there comes over you a burning desire to offer him a pension of five francs a year for his widow, blow his brains out, and have done with him.

Compensation is not, however, altogether wanting for the agony you endure. Bore as he naturally must be, the *commissionnaire* is often a very civil fellow. If you are an entire stranger in the town, it is something to have a companion to talk to; and if you can only persuade him—which can be done by a little judicious management—to abandon his historical and antiquarian stilts, descend to the common level, and talk about common things, you will frequently find him very amusing, full of anecdote—tending slightly too much, however, towards stories of British noblemen who have presented him with five-pound notes—and altogether a good-humoured cynic, taking things as they come, and

watching mankind as they go, with some keenness of observation. There is profit also in making acquaintance with a new type of humanity; and the *commissionnaire* is quite *sui generis*. Moreover, plume yourself as you may upon your powers of self-reliance, your comprehensiveness of survey, and your capacity for finding out things for yourself, there are a great many objects of interest in every continental city which you are sure to miss, unless, failing some resident person, you take a *commissionnaire*. We sneer at the foreigners who come among us and know nothing of London beyond "Leycesterre-squarr" or "Le Soho;" but Englishmen find in foreign towns an orbit even more circumscribed. They live in portmanteaus and foreign Bradshaws, and *salles-à-manger* where the English newspapers lie on the table, and guide-books which, as a rule, resemble the Encyclopædias, perpetuating from century to century the blunders of their predecessors.

You may learn a great deal by wandering or driving about a town without a *commissionnaire;* but you may learn much more if you alternate a day under his guidance with one in which you are dependent on your own resources. Else you will lose much edification, and commit, besides, some grievous mistakes. I walked the other day, being my own guide, into a handsome building, and right upstairs to the first floor, thinking it was a museum. I was stopped by a servitor in a shabby livery, who had a plate full of *butter brods* and sliced sausage in one hand, and a black bottle in the

other, and who was in a dreadful rage at my intrusion. "No musée! no musée!" he exclaimed, as he bundled me out. I am afraid that I had got into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that the retainer in livery was taking up his Excellency's lunch. Unless you are very careful, even more compromising errors may occur. You may, on a wet day, when the hall-porter is asleep and the sentinels on duty are snuggling in their boxes, stumble into the very palace of the monarch, and, before you can sing a song of sixpence, find yourself in the counting-house where his Majesty is reckoning his revenues, or in the parlour where her Majesty the Queen is eating bread and honey. For continental kings and queens seem to live on very familiar terms with their subjects. They are seldom walled in. You may look through the windows opening on to the street into the royal kitchen, and see the royal pots and pans glistening, and ascertain, if you have a mind, what their majesties are going to have for dinner; nay, it is not improbable that you may perceive the heir apparent flattening his nose against the drawing-room window-panes, and watching the nice young ladies as they come up and down the street.

So you see there is as much to be said for as against the retention of the services of a hired guide. I took one at Antwerp. After all, it was a new sensation. He plodded on before, like a horse on a towing-path. His tongue was the cable, and he drew me on leisurely, a lazy canal-boat. You get dazed and dreamy at last.

You find yourself wondering what the *commissionnaire* is like when he is at home; what he has for dinner; whether he rehearses to his family at supper-time that the Hôtel de Ville is "an elegant Gothic structure, built in 1377, the niches of which were formerly decorated with curious statues of the Counts of Flanders," or puts his children through a course of chronology touching upon the dates of the erection of the cathedral and the fountain of Quentin Matsys. You wonder what he thinks of the show himself, and whether he has such an enthusiastic admiration for Rubens as he professes when, standing before the "Elevation," he conjures you to stand a little to the left, and so avoid the glare of the varnish; or whether he really believes that the late Sir Robert Peel offered six thousand pounds for the small "Crucifixion" by Vandyck, and that the Dean and Chapter refused the money. As, plap-plap, like a cistern, his oft-told tale goes on, you find yourself wondering why he always carries that umbrella in fine weather; why he doesn't wear moustaches, and yet is terribly in want of shaving; how he came to be a *commissionnaire;* how he likes it now, and whether he will ever seek some other means of livelihood. Can't you understand this comatose, semi-vacuous state? Have you never experienced a similar sensation, listening to the human bagpipe at Holyrood, who drones out a dreary screech about "Queen Mary's privvet starr-keese," and the "apairtments of the Duk o' Hamulton and Shatilrolt?" I am reminded of a story of a very

languid guardsman, who once, *aux abois* at not knowing how to pass the evening, strayed into that dreadful cave of Despair, now happily defunct, the Great Globe in Leicester Square. The *commissionnaire* for the nonce was a pale fluent lecturer in spectacles, and with a very luxuriant head of hair. As he went on, waving his long wand, and gossiping about the Bight of Benin and the Gulf of Carpentaria, the languid guardsman grew dreamy, and at last remarked, quite innocently: "That's all very well; *but where do you get your hair curled?*" The remark was not to the point, but was pardonable, perhaps, under the circumstances.

As for the expense you incur by the engagement of a *commissionnaire*, you will not save much by endeavouring to do without him. Somebody must have your money. Economise in one detail, you will be fleeced in another. Take care of the pence, if you will; but the pounds will take care of themselves, by levanting on some pretext or another from your pocket. The days of going abroad in order to reduce our expenditure are past. Life in the nineteenth century is short, and dear into the bargain. At least, if the *commissionnaire* portions out your funds among his own friends and acquaintance, he takes care that the outsiders shall not get anything. To cab-drivers he is hard, even to mercilessness; and he is rigid in exacting your proper change from strange shopkeepers. After all, there is, on the head of travelling expenses, not much to surpass the oft-quoted reflections of Tristram Shandy. The

Reverend Mr. Yorick hit the right nail on the head. You might have lost that pistol tinder-box at Sienna; you may have been mulct in five pauls for two hard eggs at Radicofani; you may have been surcharged a livre or two above par for your supper and bed at Lyons; but "at the most they are but one shilling and ninepence-halfpenny. Who would embroil their philosophy for it? For heaven's sake and your own, pay it—pay it with both hands open." As Mr. Yorick sagely observes, "Unless you pay twelve sous for greasing your wheels, how should the poor peasant get butter for his bread?" There must be ups and downs, or how the deuce should we get into valleys, where nature spreads so many tables of entertainment?

I can speak with much commendation of the guide who gravely danced me up and down Antwerp. He had all the better qualities of his race, and his boredom was not past bearing. His name, I think, was Mr. Peeters. He had never been to England, but spoke capital English, and in his feelings was quite a Briton, insisting on reducing millions of francs into pounds sterling, and at the end of four days' attendance off and on agreeably surprising me by the information that he would consider himself well paid with "just one half-guinea." He would have disdained to say twelve francs fifty. I am inclined to believe in the sincerity of the raptures into which Mr. Peeters was continually falling when Rubens's name was mentioned; and of the indignation he expressed in relating that there was

a Vandyck Quay and a Jordaens Quay along the Scheldt, but no wharf dedicated to the memory of the mighty Peter Paul. "A Quay Jordaens, indeed!" quoth Mr. Peeters. "He fit only to paint potmen for the beer-shop." He was very angry, too, with the majority in the town council, who, when the monument to the great master was put up in the Place Verte, declined to have it re-christened as the Place Rubens. This, I say, I am fain to believe; for the Antwerpers are really, and with equal justice, as proud of the fame of Rubens as the Scots are of Burns, or the Genevese of Jean Jacqués Rousseau. Here not only he lived and died; but here remain, in spite of wars and revolutions and successive epochs of foreign domination, his incomparably magnificent works.

All Antwerp is redolent of Rubens. In every church, in every chapel, his great glowing presence shines over nave and aisle, killing even the religious light of the stained-glass windows. In the Museum his pictures, like Aaron's rod, swallow up the works of the minor masters. He even subdues his pupil and friend, and in some degree compeer, Vandyck; but not unkindly, not brutally, not contemptuously. The grave and majestic painter of Gevartius walks modestly, but with calm dignity, by the side of his dashing master, as Philip Massinger might walk by the side of Ben Jonson. The Antwerpers must suffer some perturbation in their divided attachment to these two great dead men. It is not that they love Vandyck less, but that they love

Rubens more. They absolutely dote upon his name. He is their Garibaldi. Every cab-driver knows the house where he dwelt, just as the Boston hackmen know Longfellow's house at Cambridge. The beautiful façade, built after his own designs, has been "restored," and utterly ruined into modern ugliness, by some pert "Pope's villa canting" citizen; but to the people the tasteless abortion is still "*Rubens' huus.*"

In the sumptuous family chapel in St. Jacques, which he himself bade build, the proudest nobles of Brabant have struggled to obtain admission for their ashes, on the plea of connexion with the family of his second wife, Helena Forman. His own race is quite extinct, as is usually the case with the giants after a little while. The fitness of things would revolt at twenty idiots succeeding to a Dante, a Shakspeare, or a Rubens. The connoisseurs may lift up their hands at my putting in a leash the burly Antwerper with the Florentine and the Swan of Avon. I cannot help it. My organization is too coarse and material to appreciate the darlings of genius, the poets with dreamy eyes and silken hair, who lie on sofas half their lifetime, to be fanned by beauty and fed with a spoon, and, in some moment of celestial inspiration, produce a thin book full of exquisite stanzas, which shall make them famous to all time. My reverence is reserved for the giants—for the men of Titanic power, always at work, always studying, always learning, till their hair is white, and their nerves are shrunk, and their blood

is cold, like Michael Angelo's, who, at eighty, drew himself as a little child in a go-cart, with this motto beneath—*Ancora impara:* "Still he learns." Such well-nigh superhuman strength I seem to see in Peter Paul. Is it my fault if—abating the "Transfiguration" and the "Last Judgment" at Rome—the "Elevation" and the "Descent" here in Antwerp are to me the grandest pictures in the whole world? And, take the entire range of his works, sacred and secular, how replete they are with the puissance which has been disciplined and subordinated by intense study and labour! What a profound knowledge of anatomy, of the laws of light and shade, and of the harmony of colours, there is in that flowing outline which hypercritics have called "careless"—in those vigorous masses of *chiaro-o'scuro* which the lovers of the polished, and the titled and the simpering, sneer at as coarse! Strength is throughout the most salient characteristic of this wonderful man. There is a rollicking, boisterous, lion-taming, serpent-strangling, iron-bar-bending "derring-do" about him always. He is like the strong man in Vinegar-yard, who used to scrunch the pewter pot—like the strong Count Orloff, who crumpled up the silver salver in his hand—like the strong Augustus of Saxony, with his three hundred and sixty-five children. Rubens's potency seems, as is not unusual, somewhat self-asserting and domineering. There is a prodigality of display, a flood of largesse. Venuses, cupids, saints, satyrs, angels, devils, lions, tigers, apes, elephants, wild boars,

Corinthian columns, Doric porticos, golden goblets, bronze gates, and baskets full of pine-apples, grapes, and melons, come tumbling out of his canvases on your head like a cartload of bricks. He should have been painter to Solomon in all his glory. What a pageant he would have devised for the reception of the Queen of Sheba! The man's ideas were all *en grand.* He married two of the jolliest fat wives it is possible to imagine out of Mahomet's paradise of corpulent houris. There is affluent fatness about his pigments, his draperies, his texture, his handling; and yet, if you wish to be at once convinced that he was every inch a gentleman of noble ways and noble thoughts, go and compare him with the gross Jordaens; an artist in his way as facile, as copious, and as various as Rubens, but as beef-witted and vulgar as a Flemish tavern-keeper. Jordaens to Rubens is as "mine host of the Garter" to Sir John Falstaff. The one has the aroma of rich Burgundy; the other reeks of bock-beer.

He is all about Antwerp, this lordly Peter Paul. You seem to hear his sounding tread, and see him come forth in ruff and gauntlets and plumed hat with a jewel in the band—in doublet of velvet and chain of gold—for this painter sat in the high places, and was the companion of princes. He was learned in the tongues, and a trusty councillor, and the king's ambassador. You see him in all his bravery, vaulting on to his great Flemish horse, and clattering over the stones, his sword ringing against the stirrup-iron, with twenty

gentlemen in his train. You see Dame Rubens number one, born Catherine Bursees, in her tapestried chamber, looking in the little mirror at right angles to her window to see her lord come up the street. You see Mistress Rubens number two, that once was Helena Forman, in kirtle and farthingale of rich brocade, waiting on the steps of that château which he himself has so gloriously painted, with two of the great baying hounds his friend Snyders loved to limn so well by her side; and behind her, comely Flemish maidens with salvers of mellow fruit and manchet-cakes, and flagons of right Rhine wine. And anon you see him in his studio, the strongest, hardest worker there—throwing the colour about, *but throwing it where it should be thrown;* wielding the pencil with the seemingly careless grace of a Costa with his bâton; only, the initiated are aware that every light touch and inflection mean something, and are begotten of knowledge and skill. There he is among his pupils; earning his hundred guilders a day; painting his "Assumption" in sixteen days; but a generous, not a rapacious painter. The Company of Arquebusiers bargain with him for one picture in exchange for a piece of land. He gives them five; and one among the group is the "Descent from the Cross."

They say that had Raffaelle lived the Pope would have made him a cardinal, his little weaknesses with the Fornarina and other fair ones notwithstanding. There have been worse cardinals, perchance, than

Messer Sanzio d'Urbino might have made. They are importuning his actual Holiness now to canonize Christopher Columbus; but I really think that if the Antwerpers could throw over the primacy of his Grace of Malines, and set up an independent patriarchate of their own, they would make a saint of Rubens. Is there not a tale of some devout pedant who, on his marrow-bones on the church flags, was heard to murmur, *Sancta Socrate, ora pro nobis?* And who would be angry with an Antwerper if in the painters' chapel he put up a prayer to St. Peter and St. Paul, with Rubens in for luck? Of the want of temporal honours the artist surely had no cause to complain. In an age when birth and rank were everything, he, the Flemish burgher, was esteemed as highly as any Count of Flanders; and it is something for us English, who have acquired some of the grandest both of his and his illustrious pupil's works, to remember that both master and pupil came to England, and were held in love and honour by our chiefest nobles; that the shoulder of each was touched by the sword of Charles I.; that one rose Sir Peter Paul Rubens, and the other Sir Anthony Vandyck.

It is not disrespectful, I trust, to the memory of the mighty master to hint that, after a while, the exclusive contemplation of his productions begets a feeling akin to fulness, not to say satiety. Like the pork pie mentioned by Mr. Samuel Weller, and to which the young lady objected, Rubens is, for a conti-

nuance, rather too rich. It will not do to feed every day on turtle, haunch of venison, ortolans, crab-curry, and *pâté de foie gras*, with Clos Vougeot and Curaçoa to wash the dainties down. You must go into the Desert for a while, and diet on locusts and wild honey. The churches of Antwerp were clearly not built on purpose to receive the pictures of Rubens, for most of them date long before his time; yet their architects would appear to have had a curiously prescient sympathy with the painter who was to come afterwards. The glowing canvases are set in the soberest frames imaginable. Their riotous hues are toned down by the profusion of black and white marble with which the decorations abound; and the whole is still further tempered by the discreet dun of the carved oak stalls, and screens, and confessionals. Were half the gold or half the colour used here in architecture that you see in Italian or in Russo-Greek churches, the result, with Rubens in addition, would be delirium of the eye.

Taking away the pictures, the Flemish churches are, with all their amazing richness and elaborateness of decoration, as cold, chromatically, as a Nesselrode pudding. You shall see this in an instant if you compare David Roberts's Spanish cathedrals with his Flemish ones. In the latter he has been compelled to give the woodwork a luscious brown glaze, which the carved oak does not possess, and to dab about the pavement groups of worshippers arrayed in the brightest hues. It was the only way to warm the pictures up.

And I have never been able to get rid of the idea that, after all, Roman Catholicism is an exotic in Flanders; that its redundance—for there is no country where it is so repulsively prominent—is forced and artificial; and that in this temperate, methodical, cabbage-bearing, cattle-breeding land, the hips and haws of Protestantism should have been indigenous. The people have a Protestant look. I saw a monk the other day with whiskers. In the churches, wherever they can, they raise barriers of carved oak, thus showing a leaning towards the pew system; whereas pure Roman Catholicism demands the "totality of the pavement," in order that it may sprawl and grovel. And then the practice of locking up their churches between the services! Is not *that* thoroughly Protestant? In the south the churches are always open. The faithful lounge in and out, like the Irish car-drivers, to say "a mouthful of prayers," or because the street is hot, and it is cool in the church, or because they feel drowsy, and they can indulge in a nap behind a pillar. Finally, if the present scandalous squabble between Clericals and Liberals continue much longer in Belgium, the nation may be found some day much nearer Protestantism than is supposed. The only hope of the clergy is in staving off the secularization of public instruction. At present the lower kind of people are grossly ignorant: but after ten years of a system of teaching akin to that of the American common school, I would not augur much for their Roman Catholicism.

When Mr. Peeters escorted me to the Church of St. Paul, to inspect Rubens's splendid but repulsive picture of the Scourging of Christ, a mass happened to be in progress, and the picture was consequently curtained up. We had to wait until the mass was over, and the *Suisse* at liberty to turn showman. *Point d'argent, point de Suisse—et point de Suisse, point de tableaux.* Pending the close of one performance and the beginning of another, Mr. Peeters took me for a stroll in that which I may characterize as the most extraordinary back-yard I have ever seen. This is no other than the famous, or as most persons with any ideas of common decency might opine the disgraceful, representation of "Calvary," which several hundred years ago the Dominican monks were permitted to set up, and which yet exists, a monument of Mumbo-Jumboism, to find a parallel to which you should go, I think, to Dahomey.

You enter, from the Rue des Sœurs Noires, a back-yard on which St. Paul's abuts. At first, you take it for a kind of cemetery, for there is a profusion of stone figures on pedestals, and in the most astounding attitudes, bordering the path. But these, you discover in time, are only effigies of saints and martyrs and confessors, for further particulars of whom the reader may be referred to the agreeable romance of Alban Butler. At the end of the yard, where properly there should be a pump, there is an artificial grotto or eminence, covered with slag or sham rockwork, precisely like the hermit's

cave in old Vauxhall Gardens. On the summit is a vile and grotesque representation of the Crucifixion, made up of figures in the Guildhall Gog and Magog style, and daubed in gaudy hues. At the base the grotto is said to be a copy of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Inside may be dimly perceived a figure covered with vestments of silk and lace; and all around, behind wooden bars, there are, grinning and gnashing their teeth like Van Amburgh's lions, or scowling like the murderers in the chamber of horrors in Baker Street, a mob of wooden figures in alto-relievo, and intended to represent the condemned souls in purgatory. The lurid flames of the *fegefeuer* are carved and painted in wood, and there are several wooden devils with horns, and hoofs, and tails, and pitchforks. This is the "Calvary." It is part of the ecclesiastical show at Antwerp. There was a crowd of women and children and boy-soldiers smoking cigars and spitting, and cracking nuts and jokes at the expression of agony in the wooden faces of the damned. The linen-vested figure in the cave was evidently esteemed of secondary importance. At the entrance was a board with inscriptions in four languages, informing the public that no charge was made to visitors to the "Calvary;" but I counted round about no less than seven well-padlocked begging-boxes "*pour l'entretien du Calvaire.*"

Excepting Belgium, it is only in Mexico, where the Romish religion has been purposely stretched to suit the barbarous puerility of Red Indians, that this

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shameful idol-worship is allowed to go on unchecked. Even the Italians are growing ashamed of such mummeries. In Brussels every year they have as preposterous a fetishism, in the shape of a procession, to commemorate the cruel tortures and wholesale massacres of certain Jews, who were accused of stabbing the wafers used in the mass until those wafers bled. We are told, when as Protestants we denounce this Mumbo-Jumboism, that we have no right to insult any one's religious belief. I suppose that Catholics and Protestants own an equal belief in all abstract matters to which this raree-show in the back-yard can have reference; but it seems to me that the wooden devils, the Vauxhall grotto and sham rockwork have about as much to do with the religious belief of anybody—except madmen—as the woad with which our ancestors used to stain their bodies has to do with the modern costume of an English gentleman. The French Republicans in '92 knocked this booth and its puppets to pieces. A hundred acts of Vandalism elsewhere might be pardoned them for this piece of common sense. But idolatry is not so easily abrogated. Grind the golden calf to powder, and sink it "full fathoms five," but the idolators will dredge for the dust, mould it into shape, and set it up again. After Napoleon's fall, the monks came out of their holes, stuck on the legs and arms and heads of the smashed dolls, restored the bits of slag which had been chipped off, gave the wooden devils a fresh coat of paint, and started a new set of begging boxes.

I suppose this term "Calvary" must be taken as the Dominican *suaviter in modo*. It was the soft inducement to belief. The Inquisition was the *fortiter in re*. That roasted you for not believing.

The priests say that monstrous caricatures and phantasmagoria such as these are emblems and symbols, and that their contemplation leads the uneducated to a reverent sense of religion, its promises and its duties. Suppose we educated them to begin with—would they still require "Calvaries" in back-yards? I think that tall stack of buildings on the other side of the yard was pretty thickly inhabited by the "uneducated." I could see, through open windows and doors, men smoking pipes, others brawling over their cards and dominoes, a cook busy over her pots and pans, a wench hanging out linen, a cobbler halting in his work to kick a snarling dog, a woman spanking a child with a shoe. Were any of these people any the better, and if so, how much, I wonder, for the show in the back-yard? Whatever is, is right, of course. Steam and electricity, printing and photography, can be compatibly co-existent with all this blasphemous tomfoolery; only I am afraid that, if the sham "Calvary" in the back-yard is altogether right, the Second Commandment must be altogether wrong.

In the Museum of Paintings, mainly composed of pictures brought from suppressed convents and churches, and enlarged by the munificent gift of the entire collection of the Burgomaster Van Eitborn, I am glad to

say that Mr. Peeters left me for a whole hour and a half to myself; and I need only hint that there are fourteen Rubenses and six Vandycks, with numerous and most brilliant gems by Albert Durer, Giotto, Memling, and John Van Eyck in the Museum, to make it clear that I spent a very delightful ninety minutes. I shrink, however, from wearying the reader with attempts at art criticism. I will only mention that I brought away with me two very odd impressions of things seen, half-droll, but wholly suggestive of a variety of topics. The first was of a wonderful picture; the second was of a wonderful man. The picture is called the "Ecstasy of St. Bonaventure." As a work of art it is nothing; it is the subject that astounds. The saint—a lusty, big-bearded fellow—is represented in his cell with books and writing materials before him, and skipping—that is literally the word—high in air, but without a skipping-rope. The painter has thoughtfully daubed in a cloud round about the toes of the holy man, to show that his ecstasy is supernatural, otherwise you might mistake St. Bonaventure for a professional acrobat. At the door of the cell is seen St. Thomas Aquinas, with a monastic friend, name unknown, contemplating with devout admiration the ecstatic Bonaventure. The legend relates that it was while the saint was writing the life of St. Francis d'Assisi that the spirit moved him so to skip. I presume they were days when people professed to believe in this kind of thing, and I *know* there are those who *say* they believe

in them now. But to be commonly consistent they should attach equal credence to an anecdote I am about to relate, namely, that when the Reverend Father Dalgairns, of the Brotherhood of St. Philip Neri, was, in his room at the Brompton Oratory, one day last spring, writing an indignant letter to a wicked Protestant newspaper, he was suddenly lifted up and turned over in ecstasy, until the soles of his feet touched the ceiling, on which he then and there succeeded in walking, after the manner of the lamented Mr. Sands, of Drury-lane Theatre. If St. Bonaventure skipped, why not Father Dalgairns? One thing, I take it, is just as likely as the other.

And now a few last words—for the reader may be growing weary of the roaring of my Antwerp lions—about the wonderful man. The Museum of Paintings is frequented by a number of artists, some really studying their craft, others employed in doggedly copying, and in a more or less mechanical manner, the *chefs d'œuvre* of Rubens and Vandyck for the picture-dealers who dispose of them—I hope not as originals—to wealthy foreign tourists. Scores of replicas of the "Pietà," and the "Communion of St. Francis," and the "Virgin teaching St. Anne to read," are thus made every year; while for Vandyck's "Crucifixion," which is but a copy of the one in St. Jacques, there is a steadily brisk demand. Sauntering along the great gallery, I became aware of an artist whose back was towards me, whose form was enveloped in a loose

poncho, and who seemed to be working in an unusually free-and-easy manner, for his body was thrown back in his chair, and his knees were raised to a level with his chin. You might have mistaken him from the rear for some loafer in the verandah at Saratoga Springs, with his feet on the rail in front of him, and whistling as he sat for want of thought. But when I came up to the easel I found, to my amazement, that this was no loafer, but Mynheer Van Biffin. Thus, in remembrance of the illustrious little lady who used to go round the fairs, I will call him for the nonce. *Van Biffin was simply painting a Madonna with his toes.* His feet were encased in woollen socks with the tops cut off—mittens, so to speak; between the great toe and the first finger of the right foot he held his pencil; on the great toe of the left foot he held his palette. The poor fellow had no arms at all: and, they told me, had been born so. Yet he is esteemed the rapidest and deftest copyist in the Museum, and can earn an income equal in English money to five hundred pounds a-year. They told me, too, that at the café he played dominoes with his toes; and that he even shaved himself by the aid of those extremities—which last feat I would rather see before believing it. He was there, however, visibly and unmistakably putting his foot-mark on the canvas; and very excellently he seemed to paint. It would have been more in accordance with the fitness of things, perhaps, had he stood on his head to execute his task.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM ANTWERP TO ROTTERDAM—"VULGAR VENICE"—ITS SHIPS AND SCRUBBING BRUSHES.

I WENT from Antwerp to Rotterdam—although it was fetching a compass, and going out of my way so to journey from the mouth of the Scheldt to that of the Maes—for the purpose of seeing whether the old place stood where it did when last I had walked upon the Boompjes. I found that it *did* so stand, and was not at all a poor country, or ashamed to know itself. I need not assure those who have travelled in Holland, that such solicitude on my part was far from supererogatory. You can never be very sure about anything Dutch. It is a slippery country. It is here to-day, but it may be gone to-morrow. There are certain securities, I believe, called Dutch *Consolidés;* but the coupons ought to have anchors attached to them. Even as in England you go down to visit some powder-mills, and seeing nothing but some broken glass and a few brickbats by the side of a pond, you are told that the mills "went off" the day before yesterday—even as in South America, trying to find the President of the Republic, to whom you have a letter of introduction, you find that the Presi-

dency has been swallowed up by an earthquake, and that the head of the Government, with nothing on but a striped blanket, a palm-leaf hat, and a blunderbuss, is trotting about on a mule, and robbing the stage-coach—even as, in the wildernesses of the Western States, you inquire for the thriving city of Buckeyeville or Hoosieropolis, and are informed that it was "burnt up" last fall—so, in the kingdom of the Netherlands, it need excite little surprise at any moment to learn that, the dykes about Onedam having given way, Onedam has been swamped; or that, the piles on which Totherdam was built having proved false, Totherdam has become once more the playground of mermaids and the portion of fishes. It seems to me that every Dutchman must come into the world with a placard of "Found drowned" pinned to him, as *his* part of the heritage of original sin; and that his churches are only so many receiving-houses of a Royal Humane Society, who keep drags in the vestry, and endeavour to assist him through this transitory vale by perpetual applications of hot blankets to the stomach, and the internal exhibition of Schiedam. You call, unthinkingly, the Dutchman heavy and phlegmatic. He is only suffering from suspended animation. He enjoys just sufficient vitality to scrub the floors, trade to Java, make cheese, cure herrings, drink schnaps, and smoke tobacco.

A great deal has been written about Holland, but nothing so odd or so *outré* as the place is itself. The

Dutch themselves declare that not so much is known about their country by the rest of Europe as about China; and in many respects the Mynheers are not unlike the Celestials. The English, who go everywhere, visit Holland—on business much, on pleasure very little, as the indifferent condition of Dutch hotels will prove; for at least our tourists, if they make everything abroad more expensive, rarely fail to enforce improvement in the hotels they patronise. The most adventurous of modern tourists, however, are shy of Holland. They object to the climate as malarious and muggy in summer, and raw cold in winter. Not one Englishman in ten thousand can speak Dutch, although it is easier for a Londoner wholly unacquainted with their tongue to guess at what they say, than to understand a Lancastrian or Cambrian peasant. We have had in latter times but little sympathy for the Netherlanders, although they themselves are well-nigh Anglomaniacs, reading English books, dressing after the English fashions, copying English observances, and showing, whenever they have the opportunity, the most cordial and friendly feeling towards Englishmen. We have set them down, I think, with great injustice, as a selfish, greedy, stupid people; in their dealings with foreign nations crafty and churlish; in their government of their colonial dependencies coldly cruel. A Dutch king, they say, introduced the cat-o'-nine-tails into the British army. Ere the Nassauer's coming, the scourge had but three thongs. In the Dutch slave

plantations was invented the punishment of the "spansbock," which consisted in trussing a negro like a fowl, with a stake over his arms and under his hams; laying him on the ground; thrashing him on one side, till he was raw; rubbing him with cayenne pepper; turning him over; thrashing him and peppering him *en suite*. The amount of punishment was measured, not by the number of stripes, but by that of the pipes smoked by the overseer. Nine pipes was an awful "spansbock." All these cruelties, however, belong to the past. That they were once practised, I know very well; for my own kith and kin came from what is now a British, but was once a Dutch, colony.

The home criminal code of Holland is now as mild as any in Europe. The grotesque or shameful punishment of men and women in the Rasp and Spinhouses, which Howard has described, are inflicted no longer. The French revolution stamped them out. At least we owe one thing to that prodigious upheaving of humanity against tyranny and corruption and superstition. It is genteel, I believe, to speak of it as "atheistical," "Jacobinical," and so forth. I dare say it was, and a good deal more. The French certainly stole all the pictures and church plate they could lay their hands on. They made mangers for horses out of holy-water fonts, knocked off St. Pantaleon's head, and chopped up St. Blaise for firewood; but at least *they abolished judicial cruelty in every country in Europe, save the two they could not conquer, England and Russia.*

From the day a French revolutionary force entered a Continental city, the rack, the wheel, the stake, the pulley, the scourge, the thumb-screws, and the branding-iron were deposed from their high estate, never to hold up their heads again, save on the hooks and shelves of museums of curiosities, or—in a fitful and spasmodic manner—in the secret torture den of a Bomba.

And I will mention another thing the atheistical, incendiary, and Jacobinical revolutionaries did. Prior to '89, and so late as when Voltaire wrote his "Raison par Alphabet," the French colleges and schools were disgraced by that same system of barbarous punishments which to this day is an abuse in all public and a few private schools in England. The French revolution marched with Jean Jacques Rousseau's "Emile" in its hands. J. J. was a fine person, I grant, to preach of humanity; but the "man of exquisite feeling, who sent all his brats to the Foundling, my dear," did, nevertheless, preach it, to a good and noble purpose. The Revolution and "Emile" put an end to the flogging of schoolboys in every country in Europe which the French overran.

In simplifying and humanising the laws, in introducing a decimal currency, and in enforcing systematic honesty in the municipal administration, the French have left their mark in Holland, as they have left it in the Rhine provinces, in Belgium, in Piedmont, and in Lombardy. In other respects, there is not a vestige left in the Netherlands to show that Moreau ever con-

quered Holland, that Louis Bonaparte was ever its king, or that, after that good-natured but effete person's fall, the Maes and the Helder, Friesland and Noord-Brabant, were ever departments of the French Empire. French domination was just an inundation, owing to the giving way of political dykes and dams. The Dutch have gone to work and pumped the water out, as they have pumped it out of the lake of Haarlem; and the old Dutch polder is under the old Dutch cultivation again. Quite as much English and German is spoken; but, save among the upper classes, very few persons—not even the waiters in the hotels—speak French. To meet a Frenchman in Holland is as rare as to meet a Chinaman at Walton-on-the-Naze. The aspect of the towns is as unlike France as it is unlike Germany; although, abating the canals, it is *not* at all unlike England. Not our England—champagne-drinking, crinoline and *chignon* wearing, cigar-smoking, beard-sporting England—but the England of the seventeenth century. You shall meet Dutchmen still in knee breeches. The Dutch servant maids are the twin sisters of those whom Brouwer and Maes painted two hundred years ago. You shall see Dutch parsons in short black cloaks and wide ruffs about their necks. The tall gables, the shining casements, the signboards of the houses, all belong to the time when we were either fast friends or bitter foes with the Dutch—either seeking an asylum in Amsterdam or the Hague from the tyranny of the Stuarts, or sending out our

fleets to fight Van Tromp or De Ruyter: not unfrequently to be soundly thrashed by those valiant Dutchmen. At present we seem to regard them neither with envy nor hatred, but with a contemptuous indifference—worse than both. We gave them back Java, which was an act of folly; since then we have been content to buy cows, cheeses, and herrings from them, and to chuckle over Canning's comic despatch:

> "In matters of commerce, the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little and asking too much;"

with the refrain about clapping thirty per cent. upon Dutch bottoms. And then we think no more about them.

It was different in the seventeenth century, when Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague had each their colony of English residents, exiles or adventurers. There is scarcely a village in the country without its English associations. There the Pilgrim Fathers embarked, to the profound contentment of the peaceable Dutch folks, whom they had driven half mad by their quarrelsome and conceited bigotry. Here the Duke of Monmouth was born, plain James Crofts; here he had a pleasure-house, and hunted and feasted and wantoned. Here Bishop Burnet wrote pamphlets against Popery. In that ale-house the high-handed British Minister caused the three regicides to be kidnapped, and sent them home to be gibbeted at Tyburn. In that Museum is Queen Mary's Bible, "given the Kyng and

I on our coronation." At that inn yet remains an unpaid score of the Merry Monarch. From that same inn, desperately "hard up" and dull, he wrote to his sister to send him a "little fiddler" to enliven his hours of exile; in that room he gazed with moonstruck eyes on the portmanteau full of gold which the foolish English Parliament had sent him, Villiers and Rochester standing by, their mouths watering. At that fishing village of Scheveningen he embarked, to be restored to the throne he filled so basely. And yet this graceless profligate and insolvent cynic made one remark concerning the Dutch which Mr. Peter Cunningham has forgotten to enshrine among the "Sayings of King Charles II." When Louis XIV. invaded the Low Countries, the courtiers of the English King were saying that *le Grand Monarque* would assuredly find Holland an easy conquest. "I think not," said Charles; "I think Providence will take care of the Dutch, because of the excellent care they take of their poor." This remark almost leads one to believe that King Charles II. had a heart.

Even in the eighteenth century young English gentlemen of figure and fashion went to study at Leyden or Utrecht. The courtly Chesterfield condescended to take a trip to Holland in his yacht, where he met and grew very friendly with a French gentleman by the name of Voltaire. Sure such a pair could have been never seen, so justly formed to meet by nature, to walk arm-in-arm on the voorhout. Society must have had

rather a nice time in a *tête-à-tête* over Burgundy between Swift and Bolingbroke; but just imagine the prospects of poor human nature when Philip Stanhope took a pinch from Arouet's box! "After you with the scalpel." "I'll trouble you for the vitriol bottle when you've done with it." "Ah! we were saying that an established religion——" But a veil may be drawn over the imaginary conversation of the philosopher of Ferney and Doctor Johnson's patron.

And the Holland of the present, and the Rotterdam of to-day? Alas! I cannot read either the *Dagblad* or the *Rotterdamsche Courant*, or even appreciate the humour of the Rotterdam *Punch*; for the "vulgar Venice" boasts a comic periodical. I am thus quite unable to enlighten you as to the present state of Dutch politics. Nor—the only persons with whom I have yet entered into conversation in the kingdom of the Netherlands being one landlord, two waiters, one steamboat clerk, and eight *commissionaires*, whose eight times proffered services I have civilly declined, there being no lions to see in Rotterdam—am I in a position to state the precise opinion of the nation on public affairs. Their private leanings are evidently and exclusively towards the extraction of as many guilders, stivers, and cents from the traveller's pocket as he is willing to part with. I am not willing to part with all. Holland is one of the dearest countries in Europe. A guilder, or a florin, one-and-eightpence English, does not go further than a franc in France or Belgium.

They say the reason is, that labour is scarce and wages high. Perhaps a redundant national paper currency has something to do with it. Go to St. Petersburg; there you find paper money and the expenses of life at a premium. Go to New York; paper money and famine prices. Go to Vienna; the same and the same. It is only in Ireland that this theory ceases to hold good; but even there the one-pound note has not banished the English sovereign.

The journey from Antwerp to Rotterdam occupies only four hours. The railway takes you first, in an hour, to Roosendaal, where the Dutch frontier is crossed, and your baggage examined by some very civil and sleepy custom-house officers. The functionary who examined mine seemed to have just returned from a friendly game at ninepins with Hendrik Hudson in the Kaatskill Mountains. He yawningly asked if I had anything to declare; and met the usual disclaimer with a fat smile, as though one load at least were off his mind. Then he beckoned a porter to come and unstrap one of my trunks, while he sat down on the other and took a short nap. On the porter opening the chest, he just peeped inside; but the first glance seemingly made him drowsy, for he nodded, blinked, then suddenly waking up, closed the box with a clang, chalked it, and sent me about my business, utterly declining to have anything to do with the remainder of my *impedimenta*. How devoutly do I wish that all other custom-house officers with whom I am fated to meet in the course of

this journey may prove as sleepy customers as this official of his Majesty the King of the Netherlands! In reality, the inspection of luggage all over the continent is growing to be a grave and solemn farce. There is very little left worth smuggling now; and, besides, the douanier can detect the habitual smuggler in a moment. The mere formality is, I presume, necessary until those stupid anachronisms, inland custom-houses, are done away with altogether.

The passport nuisance, I am glad to say, has altogether disappeared from Holland. Neither at frontiers, at stations, nor at hotels are you asked for papers. At Rotterdam, going to the *poste restante* to ask for letters, I made a show of my Clarendon credentials to the clerk. Long habit was my prompter. He shook his head, and with a smile asked me in capital English to tell him what my name was. By the way, he was smoking a very big cigar, with letters all around him. The Dutch seem to smoke morning, noon, and night. The children, they say, wont go to school until their mamma supplies them with the customary after-breakfast pipe of Maryland. When you are about at a railway station to take your ticket, you are amazed to find a cloud of smoke issuing from the little latticed aperture of the pay-place. You think first it must be on fire, but it is only the ticket-clerk inside who is smoking. Just the same phenomenon is visible in the money-takers' boxes at the theatres. On my first entrance into a Dutch church so dense was the fuliginous fog, that I imagined

the congregation to be smoking *en masse;* but I soon discovered that the fumes which were half choking me were not of tobacco, but of bog-peat, and proceeded from the innumerable "fire-boxes" or foot-warmers on which the lady worshippers rest their feet during service. They must be wanted, for the Dutch churches are the coldest I ever entered.

From Roosendaal another hour's rail takes you to Breda and to Moerdyk, where you enter a corpulent, comfortable little steamer, and paddle slowly but surely through the Hollands-Diep, which seems as shallow as the Serpentine, to Dort or Dordrecht. It was by night that I made this journey, and there was a fog and some rain; but my eye soon made out that I had entered the queer country which, according to Butler, "draws fifty feet of water;" in which "men live as in the hold of nature;" the country that is moored to the bottom by chains and hawsers, and on which "you do not land, but go aboard." By degrees I made out my first dyke, my first row of pollard willows, and my first battalion of windmills. Dykes, willows, windmills, canals, sluices, and *treykschuyts*—that is Holland—stop: ducks. "*Adieu, canaux, canards, canaille!*" cried grateful Monsieur Arouet de Voltaire, when he sailed away from Scheveningen in Milord Chesterfield's yacht. The "*canaille*" was a scurvy sneer. Voltaire was glad enough to publish in Holland books which he did not dare to publish in France; and Mirabeau, kicked out of every country in Europe, and menaced with the gibbet in his

own, found an asylum in Holland till he behaved so badly that the Dutch locked him up in gaol.

There was a *table d'hôte* on board the steamer; the waiters all spoke English; Allsopp and Bass, Guinness and Reid, not forged, but genuine, were on hand; English pickles filled the plates, and English sauces the castors. The only thing wanting was a troop of English guests to partake of these dainties. I really don't know what has become of all the tourists. In eighteen days I have met but a single Britisher, and that one, and the last, was a travelling dentist. It may be that I am apt to forget that the middle of December is not ordinarily the time when my countrymen wander about the continent.

It was rather too cold and too foggy, when we stopped at the wharf at Dort to land passengers, to remember that in this, the oldest city in Holland, the famous Synod of Dort was held nearly two hundred and fifty years ago. I read the Synod up afterwards in the guide-books while the steamer proceeded on her voyage to Rotterdam. These worthy divines, it would seem, settled all about the doctrines of Predestination and Grace. They cursed Arminius for a schismatic and then separated in brotherly love, the president declaring that their "miraculous labours had made hell tremble"—thus leading one to the conclusion that the Synod of Dort did not by any means think "weak tea" of itself. If you inquire for the fruits, immediate or remote, of the Synod of Dort, I might mention, per-

haps, the Scottish Covenant, the Great Civil War, the "Blue Laws," Quaker-scourgings, and witch-burnings of New England, many thousands of red-hot sermons, and many thousand volumes of bilious theology. To say that "hell trembled" at the conclusion of the Synod's deliberations lacks, perhaps, *vraisemblance*. It is more probable that they were glad and laughed down below.

The steamer takes you right up to the Boomjes, the finest ship quay in the world—I do not even except the Broomielaw at Glasgow. The river Mayes at the Boomjes is full forty feet deep, so that the biggest Indiaman can load and discharge cargo here, within a few feet of the warehouses and counting-houses of their owners. The Boomjes themselves refer to a row of young elms, at this season of the year bearing a remarkable resemblance to three-pronged forks stuck on end, which for nearly a mile and a half extend along the quay. This is, moreover, divided by blocks not only of commercial buildings but by some of the handsomest private houses in Rotterdam.

It was quite a new sensation, looking out of one's hotel window on the morrow of arrival, to find the plane of vision half filled by a huge ship taking in cargo for Batavia, with a background of willows and windmills, and a foreground of casks, bales, and smoking Dutchmen in wooden shoes. It brought at once to the mind the passage from the Thackerayian ode in praise of "Limerick prodigious," with its

"quays and bridges," its "muslin from the Indies," and "ships up to the windies" on the Shannon shore, although this was on the Maes, and at Rotterdam. It is as well, at the risk of indulging in that iteration which Shakspeare has qualified with an adjective too strong for quotation, to follow the example of Thomas Hood, and keep on repeating that you *are* at Rotterdam, otherwise you may fall into strange blunders and entertain curious delusions. One side of the Boomjes, for instance, is like Westbourne Terrace, and the other like Wapping. Entering the town itself, crossing the first drawbridge, and plunging into the labyrinth of quays and canals, you begin to fancy you are in Venice, until, instead of the Crimani or the Mocenigo Palace, the High Street of Chester smiles affably at you from one side of a *gracht*, and that tall tower in the distance, which should properly be the Campanile, transforms itself into the likeness of St. James's, Piccadilly —which I have not thoughtlessly selected for a simile, it being the very spit and pattern exteriorly of a Dutch church.

On a November morning, to look out on a wet quay, bordered by wet trees, with wet windmills in the middle distance, a wetter sea in the background, and the wettest sky overhead, distilling a persistent moisture, is not very conducive to that state of mental exhilaration which is termed, inelegantly but forcibly, "jolly." Men staying in lonely inns have done desperate things on wet days. Washington Irving's stout gentleman

was driven, under the persecution of Aquarius, to salute the chambermaid with a kiss. Ay, and he kissed the landlady to boot. Rain, as a rule, makes one wretched. A Frenchman, who translates the "ennui" from which he really suffers tortures into that fabulous British malady, "le spleen," would very soon ring for a brazier of charcoal and a box of matches, and hermetically close all the doors and windows—the which is difficult in this damp and windy country—and, without further ado, asphyxiate himself. The view of the wet Boompps fails, somehow, to engulf me in despondency. I like the man with the birch broom, and I wonder how many stuyvers he gets a day for washing the rain away. I fancy him a kind of Low Country Ixion, condemned to this labour for punitive reasons. I have read old stories of vagrants in the Dutch rasp-houses sentenced to hard labour in a room where there was a pump, and into which water was continually flowing. If they did not pump it out, they were drowned. I like the little Dutch boys who come splashing along, with their bright violet stockings and their clumping wooden shoes. I admire the fubsy Dutch damsels who pass in their multiplied yet abbreviated linsey-wolsey skirts, and the thin plates of gold over their banded hair, and neatly twilled caps, and demure gorgets, and massy ear-rings. Surely these Dutch damsels can never want sweethearts, for I calculate that, on a reasonable average, every young woman has at least seven-pounds-ten-worth of good substantial finery about her. I like

the Dutch young woman; though the censorious may urge that her gait more intimately resembles a waddle than a walk.

A traveller, even the most splenetic, has no right to suffer from the spleen when he can see ships. Now, on the Boompps this wet morning, there are any number of ships. I will dismiss the great flat-bottomed barges, heaped high from stem to stern with cabbages, with onions, or with the cannon-balls of peace—Dutch cheeses. I will eliminate from my picture, the lumbering *tuylschuyts*—omnibuses of the water, which look like the lord mayor's barge grown out of all shape, or the Bucentaur become dropsical. Of schooners and brigantines, sails and ferry-boats, clinging to the Boompps like burrs to the hand which is drawn through a hedge, I will say nothing. But I cannot omit that great, deep-hulled, swelling-sided three-master, the Waterstaat East Indiaman, which is even now loading for Batavia, and is to set sail to-morrow morning, they tell me, for her spicy destination.

I love a ship. My heart leaps up, quite as high as Mr. Wordsworth's when he beheld the rainbow in the sky, when I think that yonder great black mass pitched all over—the ark which contains Shem, Ham, Japhet, and their wives and families; and casks of beef and pork, and preserved peas, and Bass's pale ale; and a hold full of Manchester cotton goods, prisoned by hydraulic pressure with shining iron bands; and pigs, and sheep, and poultry, and all manner of creeping things—shall,

with no stronger assistance than that afforded by a few poles and some tarred strings and some wet towels, but with a trusty man at the helm, and a master mariner who knows his Hamilton Moore by heart, be wafted over the world—be spirited from these dull, misty Boompps to the huge hot Javan region—to the land of infinite spices and continual coffee groves, where the very air is sticky with sugar. How inadequate seems even the biggest ship to contain a tithe even of the things which you know to be stowed away in her! Row round her, pace her deck from stem to stern, view her near or from afar off, and still you can with difficulty persuade yourself that so much cargo, and so many stores, and so many living souls—to say nothing of the cow amidships, and the fowls in the poultry-coop—can be in reality packed within her sides.

It is all very well, when she is a steamer, to be told that she gets lighter every day, owing to the quantity of coals she has burnt; but how did she get all those coals into her bunkers, to begin with? It is all very well to explain to me the theory of winds and tides, and the mathematical laws of navigation; but her sails and her masts, her captain and her crew, her charts and her compasses and her quadrants notwithstanding, she is not the less to me a mystery of mysteries. However she does get, anyhow, to her destination I know no more than did the wisest man that ever lived. King Solomon was fain to confess that, next to the way of a fowl in the air and a serpent on a rod, the way of a ship on the sea puzzled him most crucially.

Now, this enormous Waterstaat East Indiaman—she looks as firmly planted at her moorings as the Stadt House at Amsterdam on its piles: yet to-morrow morning, when I take a survey of the Boompps from my windows, I shall find the Waterstaat clean gone—gone, like the puff of smoke belched forth by a cannon in a holiday salute. And she will reach the shores of Java somehow, this unwieldy monster; and, all unwieldy as she is, the waves will make sport of her, and dandle her like an infant, or send her spinning like a top, or see-saw, like Margery Daw, and turn her all but upside down.

There are three nuisances at Rotterdam. First, it is very nearly always muddy, and the paving-stones, which are of the round or kidney potato form—or say that they resemble the halves of Dutch cheeses petrified—are frightfully slippery and agonising to the unsure of foot and the afflicted with corns. Next, there are so many canals, and so many ships of heavy burthen continually passing, that they can only be crossed by draw-bridges, which divide in the middle, and are hoisted up by huge cords and cranes, so that when a ship is being towed out you have often to wait ten minutes, if she be heavily laden, before the bridge is down again. In general, however, the delay does not exceed a minute or two; and as soon as ever the two halves begin to approach each other the people on either side the canal begin rushing on to the bridge, at the risk of being tilted backwards, and so describing involuntary summersaults. They say that Andrew Both, the landscape-

painter, tumbled into one of the Rotterdam canals and was drowned, through eagerness to cross a bridge ere it was well closed. Others declare the catastrophe to have taken place at Venice, where the bridges are irremovable, and that a jealous Venetian citizen assisted Both over the parapet. It does not matter much. Is not Rotterdam the "vulgar Venice?" The third and last nuisance is that the Dutch are very stingy with their gas; and the gas itself being rather a dim and marshy article, at perpetual issue with the fog, you feel inclined to paraphrase Dr. Watts's hymn and say, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder *where* you are." There are indeed so very few lamp-posts, and so very many canals, that for a gentleman at all "tight," going home late must be rather a perilous proceeding.

It is not, I hope, disrespectful to a doubtless estimable citizen of Rotterdam, although one personally unknown to me, but who lives in a very handsome house on the Boomjes, to state that a pleasurable glow comes over the foreigner when he reads, in plethoric letters, on that estimable citizen's doorjambs, the name of "Mynheer van Dam." Yes; you are indeed in Holland; there has been no exaggeration. There are Dams to the right and Dams to the left, and Dams round the corner. In a moment of spleen did not a great lexicographer cry out to the Dutch—

> "Ye amphibious, quickly may ye fall;
> Ye've dammed yourselves, now may——

The rest of the couplet I leave to be supplied by the

amateurs of *bouts rimés*. You are in Holland, and you begin to remember all the extravagant jokes, many of them of the vilest, which have been perpetrated at the expense of this hardy, frugal, and wonderfully industrious people. How one wag said that the reason why the Dutchmen wore so many pairs of knickerbockers was to conceal the fishes' tails which gracefully, although not in strict ethnological correctness, terminated their spinal column; how they were the inventors of high, thick collars, as being useful in hiding gills; how another insinuated that the Dutch girls wore wooden shoes to hide their web-feet; and a third asserted that whenever a Dutchman was alone, and thought himself secure from observation, he began to quack like a duck. Why shouldn't he, if he liked?

In Holland there is as much real liberty, social and constitutional, as in England, *and there is no* odium theologicum *as in Belgium*. The Protestants, the Catholics, and the Jews all live together in the greatest harmony; and the Dutch merchants and planters who come home from Java are anything but intolerant regarding the oriental creeds. People go to church in this country to keep their feet warm, not to pray for prospective portions of burning coals for their neighbours. In the villages, the sermons of the pastors bear mainly on the holiness of soapsuds, and the pure morality of continually scrubbing the floor. They leave the Pope alone, and the Sheik ul Islam, and the Grand Mufti, and the Archbishop of Canterbury; and polish up their

pots and pans till they gleam like gold, and eat their hard-won bread, and thank heaven; and are perhaps as happy as any people can be who are said to be hard-roed and soft-roed, and who have certainly rather a dull, scared look, as though they had been brought to the surface by means of a hook, a worm, and a landing-net.

In the city of Cologne, according to Coleridge, there are seventy distinct stenches. In Rotterdam I only counted five smells. Imprimis, canals; that is to say, open sewers, the precipitate dredged up and held in solution by incessant navigation. Next, kippered herrings. Thirdly, gin. Fourthly, Dutch cheese. Fifthly and last, *cleanliness*. Excessive cleanliness, eternal washing and scouring and scrubbing, will emit, it is known, an odour. Some people call it the "poor" smell—not the perfume of poverty in its own wretched dwellings, but that mingled scent of soap, soapsuds, and deal boards which is to be found only in workhouses and asylums. The Dutch scrub not only the inside but the outside of their houses. The trundling of mops in Rotterdam is like unto the revolutions of innumerable Catherine-wheels. If you look out of window, ten to one but a servant-maid underneath will salute you with a stream from a hydropult, or a huge syringe that would have done Thomas Diafoirus good to look at.

You can seldom make out with precision when it is raining in Holland, for the reason that the moisture

comes up as well as down; and when the natives don't think the ground oozy enough they slush it with water; they not only wash the doorstep and the pavement in front, but the very road itself. From the window of the New Bath Hotel on the Boomjes, I watched a tall young man, in violet-coloured stockings and sabots, occupied for a full hour in throwing pails of water on the muddy quay—for it was then not raining, but pouring unmistakably—and smoking a cigar the while. If they could only wash the bottoms of their canals, or, better, drain and pave them with Dutch tiles, as the Burton brewers do their pale-ale "coolers"! This scrubbing has its drawback in the fact that it does not cease when business hours commence and people begin to take their walks abroad. Cease! it never ceases. The scrubbing-brush is always a stumbling-block in your path. You are always bruising your shins over the housemaid's pail. At that post-office I spoke of, the marble pavement was being scrubbed at half-past five in the evening. At the hotel they were scrubbing the stairs at ten o'clock at night. Depend upon it, if there be one place in the world where the leopard could be made to change his spots, and the Ethiop his skin, that place is Holland. A Dutchman would render the tiger immaculate, and scrub the blackamoor white. He would do it, or die in the attempt.

Walk where you will in Rotterdam, you cannot get rid of the ships, and the scrubbing-brushes, and the five smells, all of which are like the Egyptian darkness,

and can be felt. The city itself is not handsome, but it is wonderfully quaint. Almost every shop has its sign, painted or carved, and generally of Brobdingnagian dimensions; and every private house has at every one of its windows the inevitable mirror at right angles, to show the occupants the people coming up and down the street. The houses of the wealthy seem roomy, comfortable mansions, with very steep flights of steps outside, very elaborately carved doorways, and very pretty roller blinds in the windows. The poorer class of houses usually have basement stories—cellars, in fact—and you may peep, if you do not by mischance tumble, into a chaos of wooden pails, vegetables, stacks of bog peat, kippered herrings, kegs of schiedam, birch-brooms, and squalling children.

Now, where is it that I have seen all these things before—the tall houses, the steep flights of steps, the underground dwellings, the multitudinous signs, painted and carved and gil[illegible] the spy-mirrors, the pretty roller blinds of lace and [illegible]d cambric? Not in France, not in Germany, [illegible]y; but in New York, in the United States [illegible]. And the linden-planted streets, they too are true Manhattanese. And the Bowery? What was that but the place of the bowmen—the Dutch Tournoiveld? The New Yorkers fancy that the old knickerbocker element has quite died out from among them; but they are mistaken. In a hundred little items of customs and costume and architecture, the chief commercial city of the States may yet remind the

observant traveller of Holland and the days when New York was New Amsterdam, and the capital of the New Netherlands. I saw Wolfert Webber's tenants waiting on his doorstep with podgy little bags containing the quarter's rent—the good man has a *lust-haus,* or "roost," a little way out of town on the Haarlem road. I saw Dolph Heyliger's mother, a broomstick in her hand, chasing that scapegrace down the Hoogstraat. I drove out to the Village of Falling Waters this very afternoon, and heard Mrs. Rip van Winkle, over her wash-tub, promising to give her husband something warm for supper when he came home. The profligate, with sundry "jolly dogs" his companions, was carousing at the sign of "*Ten Ouden Bareel;*" and Snyder, his cur, was waiting outside. Here is their good health, and their families', and may they live long and prosper: for there are bits of New York to this day as like Holland as a bit of Jan Steen.

A good new hotel is much wanted at Rotterdam. I say this in the interest of general tourists. So far as I am concerned, a good old hotel is quite good enough. The "new" bath at Rotterdam, which looks antiquated enough to have been built by the Grand Pensionary De Witt, is an inn quite after my heart, but one which Mr. Podsnap, travelling with his family, and his friends the Veneerings, might, I am afraid, denounce as a sample of the "way foreigners do." The *salle à manger,* for instance, is very like the saloon of a steamer; the waiters are very like stewards; and

smoking at meal times is not prohibited. Some people also might object to being put into a great rambling apartment, something between a barn and Rubens's room at Windsor Castle; the walls decorated with pictures of Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac, Moses slaying the Egyptian, Herodias dancing John the Baptist's head off, and Alexander receiving the family of Darius—all life-size—with a huge column-supported chimney; and over that the picture of a bouncing shepherdess reposing her head in the lap of a shepherd by the name of Van Bankin, who, for once, is not smoking, but playing upon a pipe to a flock of sheep with very thin legs and very large tails; the animals regarding him with a subdued and contrite expression of countenance, as though he were telling them that the day must come for them to be made into mutton chops and mortgage deeds and frock-coats of double-milled Saxony. Exceptions also might be taken to the tenuity of the towels, the smallness of the water-jugs, and the almost entire absence of water. I suppose so much of it is required for scrubbing the floor. The water of the Maes is, moreover, not potable to unacclimatized persons, and you are thrown back on Seltzer. Holland, in fact, may be described as a country where there is "water, water, everywhere, but not one drop to drink."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HAGUE—THE "OUDE DOELEN"—A DUTCH RESTAURANT—THE THEATRE—THE MAURITS HUIS—PAUL POTTER'S BULL AND REMBRANDT'S SCHOOL OF ANATOMY.

THE Hague is like Hanover Square, with a pond in the middle and canals running along Brook Street, Maddox Street, and New Bond Street. It is the tidiest and most respectable little capital I have ever seen. It is not at all picturesque, but eminently pigtail; and the Gravenshagian mind would be unable, I should say, to contemplate three crimes of deeper dye than those of neglecting to pay one's rent, throwing a piece of orange peel on the pavement, or coming home after twelve o'clock at night. He who would be so incredibly reckless as to wrench off a knocker at the Hague, or to yell, "Slap bang, here we are again!" in the streets, would be capable of poisoning his mother-in-law with strychnine, or speaking disrespectfully of the Constitution of the United States.

To come to the Hague, after struggling and splashing about muddy, amphibious, bustling, brawling Rotterdam, is like diving out of the crowd and turmoil of Fleet Street into the cool courts and quiet gardens

of the Temple. Without risking much sinfulness in the way of incongruity, you might rechristen the Lange Houtstraat, Middle Temple Lane; the Punsingracht, Paper Buildings; and the Noord Einde, Pump Court. A dozen times have I expected to see Mr. Serjeant Roland, red-bagged and horsehair-wigged, trotting down the roomy old staircase of a house on the Vifverberg, and passing the time of day to Mr. Oliver, Q.C., on his way to his chambers on the Voorhout. The Binnenhof, or "Inner Court," also reminds you intimately of Lincoln's Inn, with a dash of Lambeth Palace about it. Here is a huge old gothic hall, where the drawings for the lottery take place, and, close by, not inappropriately, is the Hoog Geregtshof, or court of criminal assize. It is the Westminster Hall of the Hague, with a fine open timber roof; and on a scaffold in front, just about the time (1618), when Walter Raleigh was having his head stricken off in Palace Yard, Barneveld, the virtuous Grand Pensionary of Holland, was beheaded here. They say that Gondomar, the Spanish envoy, looked on from a window in the old Exchequer Coffee House while Sir Walter was being done to death; and the Dutch declare that Prince Maurice of Nassau beheld the cruel slaying of Barneveld from a side window in the ancient palace of the Counts of Holland. The Dutch people loved the poor old Pensionary—he was seventy-two—and the sand saturated with his blood was carefully scraped up and preserved in phials.

Pray don't think that because the Hague is quiet and composed and "pigtail," that it is by any means dull, or that it possesses at all an odour of Great Gaunt Street. Its tranquillity is like that of Bath or Cheltenham, or Weymouth, or the Place Royale in Paris, or Bologna in Italy—all "pigtail" places to the very roots; but where, if you take things in a right-minded manner, you may be equably and temperately jolly in a quiet way. You will, if there be any truth in the proverbial rhyme, very soon become healthy, wealthy, and wise at the Hague; for early to bed and early to rise seem to be the universal condition of existence there. The fireman comes to make your stove red-hot at seven o'clock in the morning. The Dutch would be very glad if you could make it convenient to dine at noon; but, in deference to your foreign habits, they will give you a *table d'hôte* at four. At about six you go to the play, which is over before ten; and as it is not customary to take ladies to *cafés* in Holland, and the so-called *cafés* are not worth going to under any circumstances, you will in all probability be in bed before eleven. They snore a good deal in the Netherlands, as peaceable folks with nothing on their consciences but a good deal on their stomachs are apt to do; and as the rooms at the hotels are very large, you may fancy, if you are an uneasy sleeper, that every chamber is provided with a Haarlem organ, including the *vox humana* stop.

I shall not be impertinent, but, on the contrary, I

trust, doing a public service, if I advise all English visitors to the Hague to drive straight to the hotel of the "Oude Doelen." The inns in Holland are, as a rule, inordinately dear and execrably bad. I bore with that painted chamber at Rotterdam for the sake of its queer decorations and of its capital look-out into the Boomjes, where I watched, with infinite edification, the whole process of completing the cargo of a Dutch East Indiaman, bound to Batavia, taking in the live stock and towing her out to sea. But, as I have already hinted, the pleasure my eye derived might have been deemed inadequate by some to compensate for the entire absence of comfort and the almost entire deficiency of anything fit to eat or drink. We got, in fact, not breakfast and dinner, but rations; and those rations unpleasantly reminded you of the *menu* on board a sailing vessel, when the fresh provisions have begun to run short, when a hairdresser's assistant has been shipped by mistake for a steward, and the cook has been drunk for a fortnight. Let me make, however, one exception. The coffee at Rotterdam, pure Java, is the most delicious you can taste at any place with which I am acquainted, save Bignon's, at the corner of the Chaussée d'Antin and the Boulevards.

The sign of the hostelry I recommend is not aristocratic. "Te Oude Doelen" means simply the "Old Bull's-eye;" and the promenade, "Tournoiveld," on which it is situated, is, as I have previously mentioned, only the American Bowery, or a Low Dutch edition of

Newington Butts. The Hollanders were of old time great shooters at marks; and their trained bands, whose gatherings painters of not less note than Rembrandt and Van der Helst have depicted, make as conspicuous a figure in mediæval municipal records as the exploits of our Finsbury Archers. The "Do-el" was the bull's-eye, and each company of marksmen had its inn, where the prizes were adjudged and mighty carousals held in honour of St. George, the patron saint of the *Schutterig*. The Marksmen's Guild of the Hague has faded to the phantom proportions of our Lumber Troop, but St. George is still, I presume, supposed to look down with approval on the periodical meetings of the Casino—a kind of aristocratic free-and-easy, whose members during the winter give balls and concerts, and card-parties in the enormous saloons of the Oude Doelen. An accurate list of the crowned heads who have "descended" at this hotel is kept for the purpose of keeping up the spirits of plebeian travellers. The arrival book looks like something between the "Almanach de Gotha" and the charge-sheet at a police-station, very much blotted; and, cold as was the evening when I "descended" at the Oude Doelen, I must confess that my whole frame was suffused with a pleasurable glow at the discovery that my all but immediate predecessor in the suite of apartments adjoining mine had been the Prince of Pertbus. Think of that. The Prince of Pertbus! Why, it was that Ineffability who brought in the soup-tureen the

other day at the wedding breakfast of the King of Prussia's niece, and who, in the miserable little watering-place which forms the capital of his principality condescends to act as a livery-stable keeper, and by the intermediary of an agent, lets you out carriages by the day or hour.

If the visitor demand any further incentive towards patronizing the Oude Doelen, behold it in the fact that the Czar Peter the Great descended here about a hundred and sixty years ago. I hope he used the handsome mansion now so ably conducted by M. Adrien van Santen better than he did the house which he hired of John Evelyn, Esq., at Sayes' Court, Deptford. There are more memorials of this rugged Russian bear scattered through Holland, to which I may have to call attention. I only trust that he did not scandalize the quiet people of St. Gravenshage—which is Dutch for the Hague—by driving wheel-barrows through the trim-clipped hedges in the garden, swallowing quarts of raw brandy with sliced turnips therein, and kicking his chamberlain downstairs at unseemly hours. I daresay that he behaved in as eccentric and impetuous a manner as he did at Saardam, at Spa, at Deptford, and everywhere else; but at the Oude Doelen they have long since scrubbed out all material traces of the Czar Peter's visit. All things considered, the visitor should go to the Oude Doelen, not only on account of St. George, and the Schutterig, and the crowned heads past and present, but for the reason that he will be

much better off than at the Nuovo Doelen or the Twev Steden, or the Marshal Turenne; that he will find a *table d'hôte* which is *not* greasy, and beds of which the sheets *are* tolerably dry.

Accuse me not of trifling. Deem me not frivolous. This is a solemn warning, a passionate entreaty, on the part of one who owes an almost life-long martyrdom to rheumatism, to damp sheets. *The very instant you enter a Dutch bed-room, send for the warming-pan.* Never mind the grotesque associations connected with that household implement; have it up. Have the bed thoroughly warmed and re-warmed. Never mind pompous Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz's sneer to the jury in "Bardell *v.* Pickwick"—"Why, gentlemen, who does trouble himself about a warming-pan?" We should all trouble ourselves about it. Damp sheets have made cripples of the conqueror in his might, and the bride in her beauty, and the scholar in his pride of knowledge. Somehow the Dutch will *not* dry their sheets. The humidity of the scrubbing-brush has entered into their souls. Some people content themselves with thrusting a shaving-glass between the sheets of a Dutch bed; and if, after a minute or two, the surface of the mirror remains unclouded, they assume that the sheets are dry. This test is perniciously fallacious. You have a right to believe the bed guilty until it can prove itself innocent. Have up the warming-pan, and give yourself the benefit of the doubt.

I have great pleasure in noting that the Oude Doelen

table d'hôte is not greasy. That gratifying fact notwithstanding, you are apt very soon to grow weary of all *tables d'hôte*—their snippets of meat and dabs of vegetables, their stale macaroons, hard pears, and grubby artificial flowers. For the cure of those fanatics who hold a *diner à la Russe* to be the only repast worth eating, I could suggest no better remedy than a course of continental *tables d'hôte*. Then they would learn what it is to be perpetually fed from a dubious table in a dark corner, never to know what is coming next, and, generally, to be disappointed when it comes. In winter, when the attendance at the *table d'hôte* is necessarily meagre—I have never sat down with more than ten persons at a time since I quitted England—it is additionally distressing to be aware that if you don't drink wine—and wine in Holland is dear and bad—the dinner wont pay the purveyor, and the landlord will regard you as an enemy.

I thought, by way of a change, one day at the Hague, that I would dine out. I had noted a restaurant close to the Hoogstraat, with a French signboard and flourishing inscriptions about "*Diners à la carte*," "*Salons et cabinets au premier*," "*Huîtres d'Ostende*," and the like. I told the head waiter, who was a Swede, and had the profoundest contempt for everything Dutch, of my discovery. He shook his head. "Monsieur had better not," he remarked. But I persisted. I couldn't stand any more *cabillaud à la Hollandaise*, which had been the fish at every *table d'hôte* I had seen since I

left Antwerp. I went to this restaurant. The "*salon au premier*" was a little trapezoid of a place, containing a stove, two huge pictures of *zee-stags*—Admiral Van Tromp defeating Blake in one, and Admiral De Ruyter giving "fits" to the Duke of York and Albany in another—and five little tables, four of them tenanted by silent Dutchmen, with a number of little oval white pie-dishes before them, precisely like the *plats* they serve up at American eating-houses, and containing questionable viands. These dishes looked so thoroughly transatlantic that, at first, I felt inclined to order fish-balls, terrapin soup, succotash, squabs, and a Porter-house steak. I remembered, however, that I was in Holland, and in a timid voice suggested oysters. The waiter, who was also the landlord, and spoke small English and less French, looked aghast. After a conference, however, through a speaking-tube, with Betje, his cook, and possible wife, in the regions below, he told me that the oysters were coming. So long a period elapsed before their arrival, that I began to fancy they had sent to Schweningen for them. Meanwhile the four silent Dutchmen had more oval pie-dishes served up to them; and I was fain to kill the time by the contemplation of the *zee-stags*.

It was not unprofitably killed either. It is good for an Englishman to come to Holland and be humble. Here his pomp must take a little physic, his pride must be let down a peg or two, and a few ounces of his Pod-snappery must be knocked out of him. This people are as

industrious, as ingenious, and as frugal as we are. They were sound Protestants ere we had quite made up our minds whether to hold by Doctor Luther or go back to Rome; and when they had established their Reformed Religion they never hanged or disembowelled any Catholics for not believing as they did. They had liberty of the press, a code of prison discipline, and a poor-law before we ever dreamt of such things; the Bank of Amsterdam taught all Europe finance before the Old Lady in Threadneedle Street had learned to work simple addition on her sampler; they invented red herrings and skittle-ball cheeses; and three old sea-dogs—Van Tromp, De Ruyter, and Pict Hein—thrashed us like sacks on our own element, the sea, and smoked victorious pipes nearly as far up an English river as Sheerness. Think of these things, Mr. Podsnap, ere you tell us that "there is something about an Englishman which," &c. &c. &c.

They brought the oysters at last, with two rounds of buttered toast as a relish. To eat buttered toast with oysters was a new sensation—and not a very unpleasant one, although it might lead on the morrow to a course of blue pill. What could I have next? I asked. There was another conference with Betje, down below; and I was told that I could have anything. The bill of fare was brought. Yes, there was an ample choice in the "*Spliskaart.*" There was "*Schildpaad Soep;*" "*Kerrij,*" "*Groente,*" and "*Kool;*" there was "*Schol,*" "*Tong,*" "*Bot,*" "*Rog,*" "*Kabelgauw gestoofd;*" "*Stokvisch,*"

"*Ofenkong*," "*Lambout*," "*Krap*," "*Dpil*," "*Deuf*," "*Kaas*," "*Bloemkool*," "*Snyboonen*," and "*Sanhocken*." I have already hinted that I am not learned in the Netherland tongues; all the analogies between them and my Anglo-Saxon only led to a supposition that stockfish and pancakes were among the delicacies in the *Spliskaart*. It was not Friday, and I did not feel inclined to fast; as for the remainder of the dinner, I threw myself on the landlord. I think he was very near throwing himself on me, so perturbed did he look. He proceeded to bring me in slow relays some cabbage soup, some *cabillaud à la Hollandaise*, a partridge, some roast pork, a beefsteak, some mutton cutlets——but here I cried, "Hold, enough," called for the bill, paid it, and fled. The dinner—it was for two—cost me two-and-twenty shillings sterling; but I dare say we could have had a good deal more meat had we called for it. I should advise you, if you are not "acquainted down to the Hague," to be content with the *table d'hôte* and forswear the restaurant. It is better to bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.

They have one of the prettiest, snuggest little theatres here to be found in Northern Europe. The management is French, and, as becomes a capital city, the staple entertainment is grand opera. It is quite astonishing to find how many tiers of boxes and how many rows of orchestra stalls they contrive to pack into one of these continental opera houses. There are four

tiers, to say nothing of a row of *loges grillés*, for instance, at the Hague. You begin by fancying that you are in a house as large as Covent Garden; but when your memory for measurement returns a little, you find out that the theatre is not bigger than the Adelphi. The prices at the Hague are high, like everything else Dutch, except cheese and red herrings; and red herrings and Dutch cheese are precisely the two things with which they decline to serve you at the first-class hotels. Sardines and Gruyère—of these you may have as much as you please to order; but a "soldier," *proh pudor!* You see that even the most unconscionable Dutch landlord couldn't charge a traveller a guilder for a red herring.

Guillaume Tell was to have been the opera of the evening—one might almost call it the afternoon—I visited the Royal Theatre. There was a hitch, however. The *forte chanteuse* had been taken suddenly ill. The first tenor had succumbed to an attack of malevolent sore throat. As these announcements, made from the brink of a precipice in a Swiss ravine, by a stout gentleman in evening dress, spectacles, and white kid gloves, who ought to have had two hearts, to such hard labour did he put the single organ, by pressing one white-kid-gloved hand upon it. The audience laughed, as I thought derisively. In this dilemma the stout gentleman went on to say an appeal had been made to the well-tried devotion and loyalty of heart of Mademoiselle X. and Monsieur Z. It was all heart. They

had nobly responded to the call, and for *Guillaume Tell* would be substituted the magnificent *chef d'œuvre* of *La Juive.*

The stout gentleman retired amidst great clapping of hands, for the St. Gravenhagians seem to be a placable audience enough; and Halévy's noble work was given, and went very smoothly—so smoothly, indeed, as to induce the suspicion that its "substitution" for other operas advertised was by no means a matter of uncommon occurrence at the Hague. I like *La Juive* much better than *Leah,* which was manifestly stolen from its story. There is an element of terror in it running with pleasant consistency throughout, which shoots, as with an ensanguined thread, through the whole gorgeous piece of mediæval tapestry work. You know, from the very first moment in the very first scene, when the black banners and *cagoules* of the familiars of the Inquisition make their appearance, that somebody is going to be roasted or grilled or boiled. It does not much matter who—the Jewess, her father, the cardinal, the prince, or the princess. It is enough for you to be convinced that the Holy Office will not go to bed without its supper, and that there will be some sport, and an *auto da fé* for a wind-up.

The officers of the King's body guard—I conjecture them to belong to that corps, for the reason that they dawdle about the streets all day, looking in at the shop windows—are very stout warriors, fair whiskered, and much given to the wearing of eye-glasses. They

are great operatic critics; and I could not help hearing in the *foyer* between the acts divers inuendoes that the malevolent sore throat of the tenor was due to other causes than sore throat, and that the prima donna had gone to bed in a rage at the continued success of Madame Ristori, who was playing on the off-nights, and drawing tremendous houses at fancy prices—as much as six guilders being demanded for an orchestra stall.

This *foyer* was a very Dutch affair indeed. It was called a *Kapjkamer*. So soon as ever the act-drop was down, the entire male portion of the audience scampered away to this saloon to smoke. They walked up and down rapidly as they puffed, drank short drinks, and got through a creditable amount of tobacco during each ten minutes' interval; and there are four in the course of *La Juive*. Nor, so far as the *abonnés* were concerned, were there any weeds wasted. A symmetrical nest of pigeon-holes was nailed to the wall for the exclusive use of subscribers, and then, when the bell to begin rang, number fifty-seven deposited his cigar stump, to resume it and light it up again at the end of the next act. If of a hospitable turn, he might give house-room to a friend's butt-end. You must come to Holland to discover what steady, systematic, indomitable smoking is. In comparison with the Dutch, the Germans are trivial and inconstant; the Spaniards volatile and desultory smokers. A Dutchman is the inspirated quintessence of fumigation. If he have any

adipose matter about him, it must be the essential oil of tobacco. I saw a Dutch funeral to-day, and the undertaker's men—who in this country wear cocked hats, knee-shorts, black stockings and buckles, and look like doctors' footmen, contrived a double debt to pay, accompanying their master in his visits to the patient while he is alive, and seeing him comfortably to the cemetery when he can take no more physic—were all smoking. The Dutch, I have already remarked, are chary with their gas; but the Hague has little need of carburetted hydrogenic illumination by night. The smokers show men the way they should go; and as I left the theatre, I could see long lanes of glowing cigar-tips radiating in every direction like avenues of fire-flies.

The Hague is the only city in Holland where the people don't seem to be always at work. In the outskirts there are plenty of windmills condemned to perpetual servitude of a ventose nature, and on the canals there is always the average number of barges and *treykschuyts*, but in the city itself there are few signs of feverish industry. Of course they scrub, morning, noon, and night; but scrubbing is pastime to a Dutchwoman, not labour. The place abounds with old curiosity shops: in themselves, I take it, signs of a town where there is much ease and affluence and leisure. One, the Royal Bazaar, which resembles the Pantheon in Oxford Street turned loose into the Mediæval Court of the Crystal Palace, is the most

gorgeous collection of *bric-à-brac* I have ever seen. Mr. Gale or Mr. Attenborough might here hide their diminished heads. There never was such a "ruination shop." You see that the quaint old mansions on the Voorhout or the Vijoerberg would be incomplete without plenty of china, lacquerwork, tapestry, and carved oak furniture. Every Dutch dwelling, to the very meanest, is in its degree a museum of curiosities. The poor, who can't afford Grand Mandarins, real buhl, and inlaid "chow-chows," go in for curiously painted cows, queer drinking glasses, and pots and pans of abnormal form. To him who is blessed or afflicted with the mania of collecting, the Royal Bazaar at the Hague is at once a source of delight and despair. You never saw such wonderful "curios" before; but you will never live long enough, or have money enough, to buy a tithe of them. Forgetful of the axiom that "vice is a monster of hideous mien," it is Dutch *virtù*, I must admit, that tends slightly towards monstrosity. The preternatural ugliness in biscuit, *pâte tendre*, porphyry, and jade exhibited at the Hague, is astounding. The Chamber of Horrors in the Summer Palace at Pekin would seem to have been evoked to make this show. Dragons and griffins and hydras that Wardour Street never dreamt of, and chimeras unrealized in the imagination of Hanway Yard, grin upon you in ineffable hideousness. Yes; it should be, I think, with porcelain ornaments, as with pet dogs. The more frightful, the more delightful they are. Come to the Royal

Bazaar at the Hague, and you will cease to wonder that the projected elopement of Mr. Pelham's mamma should, owing to her passionate devotion to her two china monsters, have proved abortive.

It is within the bounds of reason to conceive a person growing after a time weary of wandering up and down Hanover Square with a pond in the middle, canals running down the adjacent streets, and Oxford Street close by, bordered with linden trees, from old Cavendish Street to Hyde Park corner. I say this is within the bounds of reason; but, few as were the days I spent at the Hague, I was very sorry to leave it. I think I could have passed a month there and not got bored. There was variety to me in the quacking of the ducks. No two doorsteps were scrubbed, to my mind, in precisely the same manner. I was never tired of gazing up at the tall, handsome old houses of clean red brick, with clean stone dressings and window casings, with their nobly and richly carved porches and friezes, and their great shining plate-glass windows. The grander kind might have been the work of Inigo or Sir Christopher; the less tasteful ones I set down to Low Dutch prototypes of Vanbrugh and Kent. There is a house over against St. Paul's, Covent Garden, at the north-west corner of the Piazzas, now an hotel, but which once belonged to Admiral Russell, the victor of La Hogue. That is, from top to toe, the house of a Dutch gentleman. Here, for once, the *sæva indignatio* of Mr. Ruskin might be mollified. Here is no sham, no

pretence, no sliming over with stucco. These houses are meant to be dwelt in—their basements to be full of pots and pans, their heavy carved presses of fine Holland sheets and diapers, their china closets of choice monsters and punchbowls holding five quarts, their living rooms of grave and solid gentlemen and plump matrons, who have chubby children and fubsy servant maids, who smoke long pipes of snowy hue, and take honest pulls of spiced drink, good for the inwards, from tall silver tankards with lids that have a statuette of William the Silent for a thumbpiece, and close with a clang doing the heart good to hear.

A Dutch dwelling! you may see it from attic to cellar, in every stage, in every detail, to the pettiest of domesticity, in that marvellous doll's house preserved in the Royal cabinet of curiosities in the Maurits Huis. This gigantic toy—for it must be ten feet high and five broad—was made by a Dutch artist for the Czar Peter, as a present to his wife. Whether his Majesty repented of his intended generosity to the Czarina, or, quarrelling with the artist, left his work on his hands, is uncertain; but the baby-house has never quitted the Hague. It is a rare and shining example of the wonderful patience, skill, and imitative genius of that poor, maligned, Carlyle-kicked eighteenth century—a century which; for all the accusations of frivolity and dissipation brought against it, could produce an Encyclopædia, could foster the labours of a Bayle, a Calmet, and a Gibbon; could fill shelves with the interminable vista of a Voltaire and a Rousseau's tomes. Can our

vaunted century boast such laborious giants of the desk?—and, in a lower grade, what exquisite handiwork did that much-libelled eighteenth century produce! Think of all the buhl cabinets; think of all the Louis Quinze frames, and the Louis Seize lustres: no stickings-on in "compo," no castings in a mould, but actual honest carving and cutting. Think of all the old Dresden, and all the old Sèvres. It is true, that in the eighteenth century the decorative artist was the thrall and bond-servant of the prince. He is now the thrall and bond-servant of the manufacturer. Is there much to choose between the two conditions?

In the palace of one of the Grand Duchesses at St. Petersburg there is shown a sufficiently remarkable doll's house; and in the Exhibition of 1862, Mr. Cremer put a modern doll, *dans ses meubles*, in a very pretty and luxurious manner. But Peter's house is no mere toy; it is, after its kind, as accurate and elaborate a model as that magnificent one of the Minotaur ironclad in the South Kensington Museum. As you peer into the upper and lower apartments of this house, upstairs and dowstairs and in my lady's chamber, you begin to fancy you are gazing at the matchless interiors of Terburg, and Gaspard Netscher, and Teniers, and Ostade, and Gerard Douw. All their wonderful details are here. The pipes and flagons on the tables, the great cupboards and settles, the draperies of needlework, the fire-boxes and sconces, the round-knobbed mirrors, the baby's cradle, the birch-broom, the doctor's electuary phial, the pots and pans, the fish and vegetables of *la bonne*

cuisine; the spinning-quadrant of *la Fileuse,* the Bible and horn-rimmed spectacles of *la Lecteuse.* Only the figures are wanting. With rare discretion the artist has banished the dolls from the doll's house, where their presence rarely fails to be intolerable. It makes you mad to see all the delicate taste and finish of the modeller spoilt by the introduction of a squad of sprawling puppets, whose drapery can never take the proper folds, whose limbs can never assume the proper curves, always inanely simpering, and frequently tumbling out of their chairs, and lying, heels upwards, in a seeming state of wooden intoxication. For the rest, dolls' houses are clearly meant for the amusement and instruction of grown-up people. The property allowed to children in them should never exceed that in the five-franc piece which Louis Philippe gave to the little Comte de Paris. "Do whatever you like with it, my grandson," was the remark of his economical Majesty, "only never change it."

Holland is the chosen land of toys, and never more so than at this season of the year, as I shall show you when I bring you to Amsterdam; and this suit of rooms at the Maurits Huis makes you doubt whether you are in a collection of art-treasures or a huge toy-shop. You grow surfeited at last with models of Chinese bronzes and talapoins, carvings in mother-of-pearl, ivory, soapstone, and steatited chopsticks and swampons; Japanese helmets in the form of pantomime masks, with brazen moustaches and whiskers of copper wire; palanquins, canoes, tomahawks, snow-shoes, and wam-

pum belts. There is Jacqueline of Holland's chair, and Admiral de Ruyter's armour; the beggar's bowl of the gueux, the Flemish insurgents against the Spanish rule, and the leathern suit worn by William of Orange on the day when he was murdered at Delft by the tool of the Jesuits, Balthazar Gerard. There is something more suggestive in a model of the cabin in which Czar Peter resided when he was learning ship-building at Saardam. There is much more that is suggestive in a huge Russian knout in a glass case over against Czar Peter's baby house. You are glad, at last, to escape from this teeming Pantechnicon, and go upstairs, where, in three or four quiet, spacious rooms, are kept, admirably classified and under an excellent light, a number of the most renowned works of the Dutch school, and some of the most astonishing pictures in the world.

Berghems and Wouvermans, "velvet" Breughels and "hell-fire" Breughels, Albert Durers, Van Huysums, Werniers, Snyders, Steenwycks, De Heems, Metzus, Mieris, Adrian Ostades, Vanderwerf, Jan Steens, Teniers—his famous "Alchemist" and his scarcely less celebrated "Good Kitchen" are here—all the great Dutchmen shine on these walls, and shine so gloriously as to have extorted from the cold Reynolds the frequent entry in his note-book, when mentioning some interior, or landscape with figures, or fruit, or flower piece, of the curt criticism, "N.B. This is done with the utmost perfection." I claim to be allowed a few words concerning the two grandest works in this collection, to be utterly silent regarding which would

be to be a dumb dog, a blockhead, and a churl. "The Young Bull," by Paul Potter. This is his masterpiece. He was very little over thirty when he painted it, and he died the next year. I sent a photograph of the bull to a friend in England, and he showed it to a Kentish farmer, who opined that the picture might be a very fine one, but that the bull seemed sadly out of condition. The bull is, in fact, a steer; and more like one of those vicious little brutes we see on the Highlands of Scotland, than the pompous, dogmatic, English animal, or the stately Spanish *toro*. But P. P.'s is the very best bull ever painted for all that. He is life size. So is the cow ruminating, so are the sheep and lambs cropping the herbage, and the bearded cowherd leaning against the tree. Everything in the picture is true to life and nature. The bark of the tree, the dock leaves, the grass, the distant meadow, and cattle, and trees; the sky, the man's face, his hands, his clothes, the load in the foreground, the various textures of the animals, the hair on the cow's nose, the swimming lustre of her eyes—equalling, and almost surpassing, that wondrous aqueous humour in the eyes of the Gevartius—all these are painted with a particularity of detail, a nicety of finish, and a sharp confidence of touch which our modern pre-Raphaelite ticklers of tea-trays might strive and strive in vain till their hair grew out of their hats, their nails grew out of their boots, to approach. And yet, with all this marvellous accuracy of portrayal and consummate skill in execution, the whole work is as broad as the Bedford Level. It

is, in truth, the breadth and grandeur of this picture, combined with its tenderness and delicacy, which have made it the glory of the Dutch school, and the despair of foreign emulators. The French gave up trying to rival it long ago; they were content to steal it. Honester, but more ambitious, our patriarchal cattle painter, old James Ward, executed, many years ago, a bull, life size, which was held to be a kind of challenge picture to Paul Potter's, just as Turner's "Building of Carthage" was the challenge to Claude's "Queen of Sheba." Claude got the worst of the contest; but Paul Potter has not lost one leaf of his laurels. "1647" is the date carved on the bark of the tree; but the bull looks fresh enough to have been painted yesterday. You may see J. Ward's bull, I think, at South Kensington. It is not deficient in power; but is a coarse, violent production, at best: a butcher's idea of a bull, painted in blood and brickdust.

The French took P. P.'s bull to Paris, and kept it there until July, 1815. Artists were hard at work copying it until the very moment when the workmen and a guard of English soldiers came to take it away. Denon ranked it fourth among the chief pictures of Europe: Rafaelle's Transfiguration ranking first, Domenichino's St. Jerome second, and Titian's Peter Martyr third. No absolute price can be assigned to the "Bull." It has been valued at 5,000*l.*; and the Dutch Government offered Napoleon 250,000 guilders, or 20,000*l.*, for it; but it is really beyond valuation. It can never be bought or sold; it can only be stolen

or burned. A good, new line engraving, or at least some large photographs of Paul Potter's masterpiece is wanted in England. We have had rather too much and to spare of the humours of pug dogs and Skye terriers, and representations of red deer disembowelling one another.

The remaining glory of the Museum at the Hague, Rembrandt's School of Anatomy, is better known in England both by engravings and by photographs. Hypercritics have asserted that the body which Professor Tulp is proceeding to dissect has just been washed. They might have added, had they been fully conversant with the etiquette of the anatomy theatre, that it had also been powdered. Some have gone so far as to declare it to be clear that the "subject" has died from inflammation of the lungs. It is probable that Rembrandt, like Molière, took his property where he found it, painted what he saw and what he felt, and he has certainly succeeded in producing the deadest-looking Dutchman conceivable. As for the portraits of Professor Tulp and his seven pupils, they just breathe, and move, and speak—so far as human hand and painted canvas will let them. It is as though Rembrandt van Rhyn had been out to supper with Titian and Rubens, and Vandyck and Velasquez, and all the great face painters; and finding his hand rather shaky next morning, had gotten Prometheus to touch up some of his portraits for him.

CHAPTER VIII.

DELFT—A DUTCH SUNDAY—THE OUDE KERK—THE PRINSENHOF.

THEY do not shut up the shops in Holland on Sunday. They have rather too keen an eye to the main chance for that. They do not close the beer-houses or the grog-shops during the hours of divine service. Your Dutchman, although he rarely gets outrageously tipsy, seldom intermits the process of quiet liquoring-up; and there is a fine touch of knowledge of Netherlandish nature in the opening lines of Bishop's glee of "Mynheer Van Dunk." The Mynheer, you will remember, although he never became wholly inebriated, "drank brandy and water daily." Two trifling solecisms in this otherwise fine poem remain to be corrected. The Zuyder Zee does not roll, but is almost as sluggish as a millpond, and the Dutchman's draught should be, not of brandy and water, but of Schiedam.

The Dutch theatres are open on Sunday night; the people dress in their best; walk about; throng the taverns, smoke and drink. In short, the day is a holiday; yet it is as unlike the continental Sabbath as it is unlike the English or Scottish one. It is, in fact,

Dutch, and a little dull. I am told that the serious classes go to church three and even four times a day, and that the subjects of the sermons to be delivered, and the names of the preachers, are advertised throughout the week precisely like play-bills. This is also an American custom. I have often run my eye down a column in the *New York Herald*, to pick out the spiciest clerical Boanerges for the coming Sunday. Now it was Dr. Cheever who was to draw a parallel between Sodom and Gomorrah and the City of Charleston; now Henry Ward Beecher was announced to testify against the Chicago Convention out of the Prophet Amos; and now Dr. Tyng was advertised to offer a few remarks on the fight at Big Bethel, in connexion with the Battle of Armageddon. What do those Habakkuk Mucklewraths dilate upon now, I wonder?

I would willingly have gone to church in Holland, but as the service is very nearly all sermon, and I have not advanced in my study of Dutch, I thought—there being no appearances to keep up—it was as well to stay away. Besides, the custodes of Dutch, and indeed of all northern European churches, directly they nose a stranger in the aisle, have an unpleasant habit of hanging about him and whispering, "Kirk over soon. Wait see tomb Maurice of Nassau; Admiral Van Dam; ver fine tomb." You grow at last touchy on the subject of the mausoleums of dead and gone Dutchmen. It only and always means that somebody wants a guilder from you. Then you are pestered to make one of a party—

two Yankees, a blind old lady, and a cattle-dealer and family from Gouda—to hear the great organ play. The organist, with a cigar in his mouth, is usually waiting round the corner in the hope of a purse of ten guilders being made up; failing which it is morally impossible for the five thousand or the fifty thousand pipes with the *vox humana* stop, and the guinea-pig stop, and the four distinct cats in a wheelbarrow stop, and the muffin bell stop, to bray and squeak. They bother you enough about their "great organ"—which is infinitely superior to any Dutch one—in Boston, Massachusetts; and the barrel-organ nuisance is grievous enough, goodness knows, in London; but they worry you nearly out of your life about their organs in Holland. What does it matter to you how many thousand pipes there are, or whether all the noise of a farmyard or a bear garden have each their several stops? It *does* matter to the custodes—it matters so many guilders.

I declare that in these and kindred remarks I have no wish to be thought irreverent, or to cast discredit on the professors of any creed whatsoever. But I have seen exhibited for hire and gain during the past few weeks—exhibited impudently and shamelessly as a rarce show—not only the graves of illustrious men, not only the armour and the clothes they wore, and the bullets and daggers with which they were slain, but the skulls and teeth and rotten bones of so-called saints, the sandals and shirts of the Apostles, and other pseudo-relics which I will not for decency's sake

specify. I have seen these things shown for florins and kreutzers and guilders and cents with as little compunction and with as much nonchalance as though they were Spotted Girls or the skull of Oliver Cromwell "when he was a young man." I have seen them in churches and cathedrals, Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist; and I say that the reckless *sans culottes* of the French Revolution did an inestimable service to the cause of Christianity and civilization when—and they never missed an opportunity for so doing—they collected all these rags and bones and rusty gewgaws into a heap, and burned them under the nose of the priests. That so many of them should have escaped destruction is a matter for sorrow; but we must live in hopes of a good time coming—the good time when the cry of sacrilege and impiety shall not avail; when superstitions which would degrade savages are denounced; and when some English member of Parliament shall have the courage to bring into the Legislature a bill making it illegal and penal to exact any sum of money—be it even a farthing—for admission to or the exhibition of anything in any national church. If deans and chapters are so poor that they cannot pay their vergers, let those functionaries—who might be advantageously replaced by pensioners or by the metropolitan police—be remunerated by the Government; but let the scandal of making a peep-show of God's house cease. You see I am moderate and constitutional enough in counselling what should be done in England. On the continent,

and at no distant date perhaps, the rags-and-bones nuisance may, perhaps, be abrogated by more summary and more sweeping means.

It being slightly dull, then, at the Hague on the Sunday prior to my departure for Amsterdam, I concluded to go to Delft. There is not much to be seen there at any time; but, at least, it was changing the venue. You may go to Delft by the railway, one of the first constructed in Holland, and which is said to have cost three thousand pounds for every mile of single rail laid; or by the *treykschuyt*, which is pleasant enough in summer, but in whose long, low cabin in winter you either freeze or stifle. So, as I wished to see the country, I elected to take a carriage to Delft. Delft is on the Schie, contains some eighteen thousand souls, and to all English housewives must be honourably and inseparably associated with the white crockeryware known as "delf." The Staffordshire potteries and the willow pattern have, however, knocked Delft quite out of time. Only the coarsest and heaviest earthenware is manufactured there now; and the production of those delightful blue and white Dutch tiles from which, as the story goes, good Dr. Doddridge's mother taught him Scripture history, has all but entirely ceased. Either the potter's clay has given out, or Copeland and Minton have been too strong for the Delfoi, that is certain. That the town is still to some extent interested in the ceramic art you may gather from a few chimneys and furnace fires, fuming and smouldering even on

Sunday, and from the presence at the street corners of many vagrant dogs and a few Dutch roughs. Making jugs and plates is not among the crafts which soften manners.

The road to Delft is as dull as Delft itself; but the authorities have striven to enliven it by establishing no less than three toll-gates on a turnpike-road of six miles. I should have liked to have Mr. Bradford as a travelling companion here. The keepers of the "'pikes" are as crusty as their congeners in Canada and the United States and the few collectors who are still permitted to afflict England. Do you know why people who keep 'pikes are always crusty? It is because they are perpetually receiving money not their own, and which they cannot easily embezzle. An analogous reason may be suggested for the proverbial ill-temper of theatrical money-takers. They are always letting people in to see the play, and they never see it themselves.

The canal from the Hague to Delft is a very fair sample of a Dutch waterway. On one side is the towing-path; on the other the carriage road. Scrubby pollards skirt it on either bank; smaller canals, at right angles to the main ditch, intersect the polders or meadows. There is a middle distance of cows, with jackets and petticoats of striped bedticking, and a background of windmills. Some of these last-named structures are of gigantic size, with two or three stories of windows and a dwelling-house complete in the basement. You

may look in vain, however, for Mr. Tennyson's "wealthy miller," powdered snowy white, watch-seals pendant from his ample scarlet waistcoat, and rattling his ready money in his breeches pocket. The Dutch miller is a long-legged personage of melancholy aspect, and wearing a fur cap; he is usually smoking a cigar, and favours generally the impression that he has but recently recovered from an attack of the ague and is sickening for another. Mr. Pickleson, the giant, and friend of Dr. Marigold, might sing with great propriety his favourite ditty of "Shivery Shakery, aint it cold?" leaning with his back against a Dutch windmill, or, indeed, anywhere else in Holland; for this is undeniably the purgatory of the "man who couldn't get warm." As for the miller's daughter, she is a squat damsel with the frontal and parietal bones of her head covered with thin plates of silver gilt. Surmounting those ornaments is a cap of pillow lace. From her temples project, ram's-horn fashion, two seeming corkscrews of gold or silver wire. She wears huge wooden shoes—underneath which may be very pretty *bottines* of kid or jean; but with *sabots* all Dutch peasants are bound to be extraneously shod, precisely as Mahometans are expected to wear *papouches;* and as your slippers are left at the door of the mosque, so are your *sabots* deposited on the threshold of the dwelling-room; another proof that the Hollanders hold cleanliness to be next to godliness. The skirts of the miller's daughter are voluminous, but they are not distended by crinoline;

on the contrary, they are exteriorly confined *à micuisse* by a tape or ribbon, causing them to bulge out, above and below, in a very odd and bread-bag-like manner. And pray can you tell me why, in England, proletarians engaged in the constructive arts—masons, bricklayers, and navigators—are in the habit of so confining their corduroys, mid-leg, with bits of string? This has always been, to me, a mystery.

You take the innumerable windmills at last for granted, and you would not be very much astonished if somebody told you that they grew. Indeed, they are much more natural-looking objects than the Dutch trees, whose branches are often cut into all sorts of queer shapes, and whose trunks are as frequently painted in staring hues. You look placably on the Dutch windmills when you remember that it was in the shadowy chambers of a mill, with its great beams and uprights, and traverses, and dark corners, that one Geretz, a miller's son of the Lower Rhine, learnt the first lessons in *chiaro-o'scuro*, of which he was afterwards to make so glorious a use when he became known to all the world as Rembrandt; and you grow amused with the baby-windmills—some of them not six feet high—scattered through the fields. What on earth are they for, you wonder! Do the Dutch grind their coffee, or chop turnips for their cows by wind? No; these baby-mills are pumps; they are always at it. In an infinitesimal degree, parts of that huge Waterstraat which is perpetually saving Holland from being swallowed up by the

sea. The country sprang a leak in the year One, and all hands have been at the pumps ever since.

The canal, along whose bank we drove, was brimful. It seems as though an extra pint of moisture thrown in would cause it to overflow; just as they say that if you put an additional British soldier on the island of Malta another warrior must fall off. The water in these canals, it is said, flows not to but from the sea; or at least it strolls down to the ocean, doesn't like the look of it, and stagnates in estuaries with its hands in its pockets. In summer they are obliged to stir the sluggish pool up with a long pole, to prevent its "growing," that is to say, fermenting and rotting, to the ultimate production of those "slimy things" which, according to Mr. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, did "crawl with legs upon the slimy sea." For the sea he should have substituted a Dutch canal.

It is not good to see women and girls on the towing paths regularly harnessed, with broad leathern straps across their chests and under their arm-pits, like the chest bands mourning-coach horses in England wear, and dragging the barges and treykschuyts along. I know, from experience, that there is no such very hard work, but rather some good fun in towing a boat for half an hour or so; but it is quite a different thing to be put into harness like a beast of draught, and to have to drag a huge caravel of a barge laden with all kinds of merchandize or crowded with passengers. Horses seem scarce, and the hire of those animals is probably

high. Why don't they put some of those lazy lolloping oxen in the meadows yonder into harness, and make them tow? The Dutch object that the ox draws from the shoulder, and would bring the barge to grief; whereas the horse and the human being draw horizontally from the loins. It seems, however, very scandalous to put women to this work. As whole families live on board the barges each member of the boat-hold must of course do his quantum of work; but the women, I think, should not be put to harder labour than to steer or turn the sails. It makes one's blood boil to see a great hulking Dutchman squatting on deck, dandling the baby, smoking his pipe, or scraping carrots, while his wife or daughter is straining every muscle on the towing-path. A Dutch physician who was good enough to attend me during a slight indisposition recently, in answer to a remark that I thought the climate of Holland the reverse of healthy, triumphantly pointed to the athletic forms and fresh complexions of the women. The females are indeed often strapping and ruddy-looking enough, but I can't help fancying that the pack-horse work to which they put them has, in the end, a very pernicious effect. In no country in Europe do you see so many stunted, round-shouldered boors, so many dwarfs and hunchbacks, so many bandy-legged and rickety children. And would you have much need to wonder at your own round shoulders and bandy legs if your mamma had passed the best years of her youth fagging on a towing-path with a leathern band across her breast?

Miss Cobbe, Miss Faithfull, Miss Craig, and other well-meaning advocates of Women's Rights, think, no doubt, their sex in the United Kingdom very ill-treated —outraged, ground down, overworked, and underpaid by the tyrant, Man. Well, it must be confessed that a male counter-jumper is an unlovely sight, and a male shop-walker an unlovelier one. It is not to be denied that needlework—even when, as the Americans phrase it, the sempstress rises to be "boss of a sewin' masheen" —is not very remunerative labour, and that there are no great fortunes to be realized at bookbinding, or glove, or lace, or straw-plait making. Domestic service is not a highway of roses; and barmaids do not pass altogether a *far niente* existence. Society, perhaps, would be relieved from much misery and much shame if careers more numerous and more various were open to English females—if they could be to a greater extent employed as clerks and assistants, as watchmakers, as decorative artists, as modellers, as photographers, and as engravers, for all of which avocations their deft and nimble fingers seem to me eminently suited. But English girls of the humblest class are not, habitually, treated as beasts of draught and burden. I believe there is no country in the world where females do so little actual hard, slavish labour as in ours.

Three hundred years ago an old foreign author called England "the paradise of women." In later times the venue of this paradise has been changed, ostensibly, to the United States, where the fair sex are petted and coddled and spoilt to an extent almost incredible to

Europeans. But if you look a little below the surface, even in America, where every labourer or peasant's daughter may style herself a "young lady" without the fear of ridicule, you will find there is an immense amount of exhaustive, slavish toil imposed on women in the land supposed to be their Armida's Garden; you will find that the New York "Lise" works longer hours for scarcely better pay than Hood's woman "clad in unwomanly rags," and stitch, stitching "a shroud as well as a shirt" in a garret. And you will find, moreover, that although the native-born American girl disdains as a rule to be a domestic servant, for the reason that she conceives such service to be degrading, she often, as a free "hand," in a factory, toils ten times harder than any cook or housemaid could do; while, from the necessity of there being somebody to scrub the floor and make the beds, there has grown up in America, beneath the polished surface, a perfect helot class —a race of female white slaves, whose bondage, however, is terminable by the great emancipator, Matrimony. These helots are the newly-arrived German and Irish emigrant girls, who are eagerly caught up by the keepers of hotels and boarding-houses, and are put to labour more grievous and more incessant than would be borne by any English workhouse apprentice or lodging-house drudge. These topics, I trust, will not be thought un-germane, for the subject of the employment of women is one that has a world-wide interest; and nowhere in Europe is the systematic and brutal

exploitation of the bodily strength of women so painfully apparent as in Belgium, Holland, and North Germany.

Thus, from a social and economic point of view, you are apt to look at the great lumbering Dutch barge, with its poor strapped-up towing women, as an abode of cruelty and wrong, and altogether a shameful thing. But regard it only with the eye of an artist—with the eye whose retina still retains some impressions of the Vandeveldes and Backhuysens and Hobbimas you saw yesterday at the Museum—look at it only as Mr. Clarkson Stanfield or Mr. E. W. Cooke would do, and the Dutch barge becomes one of the most charmingly picturesque objects imaginable. Its beeswaxed hull, its bright little flag of colours, its sails of rich maroon hue, like those of our Hungerford hay-boats; the fluttering linen drying in the rigging; the blue curling smoke from the cabin-chimney; the glistening panes of the casements, for the Dutch barge has, not portholes, but windows; the piles of merchandize, clean yellow casks, mounds of Dutch cheese, bales of cabbages, arsenals of onions; all these "compose" admirably with the lazy green water, the dun canal boats, the scrubby lines of pollards, the grey windmills, and the mist that wraps all round, like a kindly blanket. Whole families live on board these barges. You may see three generations between the helm and the prow. There are children playing, and children quarrelling, and children *smoking*. There is a little humpbacked boor aft playing on the

fiddle; and the long-legged man in the striped night-cap leaves off scraping carrots, snaps his fingers and begins to dance. So, with its sacred freight, the barge floats down the sure though sluggish stream of Time, and I shall never see it again. They live on board these floating farm-houses, rear pigs and poultry there, court there, are married thence, die there, and heave to, I suppose, for ten minutes, at a waterside cemetery to get buried.

The treykschuyt, or passenger-boat, is quite another affair. It has always its one or two horses on the towing-path to drag it, and these horses are often bestridden by smartly-dressed postilions. With its *ruim*, or fore cabin, and its *roef*, or after saloon, it may be compared to that now disused municipal Bucentaur, the Maria Wood, with all the gilding scraped off, and a considerable quantity of essence of tobacco, gin, red herrings, and cheese, rubbed into the timbers to give it a flavour. The treykschuyt is cheap enough, costing but a stiver per mile per head, and in summer time is said to be much preferable to the diligence. To a person of slowly imaginative temperament it may be tolerable. With plenty of stimulants and agreeable society, you might fancy you were engaged in the bygone pastime of swanhopping. Of the Dutch treykschuyt I have no actual experience; but I have tried the canal-boat in bygone years in Belgium. I did not think it a bore then; but I am afraid I should do so now. There is a time of life when to pay a stiver a

mile for your locomotives, and to sit on a bench smoking a meerschaum, sipping sour beer, and thinking the stout Flemish lass who brings it to you a very Hebe, approach very nearly the acmé of human felicity. Thoroughly to enjoy the canal-boat you should have plenty of money—that is to say, very little, and be twenty years of age.

We made the old stones—they should be tiles—of Delft rattle under our carriage-wheels. The vagrant dogs yelped; the Dutch roughs looked up, and thrust their hands into their breeches pockets deeper than ever. We passed a charity school out for their afternoon walk; and a prettier charity school I never saw. Such plump and rosy little rascals of boys! Such fat, demure, and bright-eyed girls! They had all evidently been scrubbed within an inch of their lives; and the boys had warm woollen jackets, and caps, and purple waistcoats, while the girls wore frocks of that last-named hue, and snowy caps and pinners. They looked like the children of charity—good, wholesome, homely charity—but not in the least like paupers. By-and-by we passed the school itself—a high-shouldered brick building, with the usual steep flight of steps in front, the carved porch, and glistening windows; and I could have clapped my hands for glee to see on either side the great centre window two little niches with painted wooden figures, one of a boy in jacket and breeches, and purple waistcoat, the other of a girl in snowy cap and pinners. It was for all the world

like our highly respected school for poor boys and girls attached to the parish of St. Pogis-under-Pump. Nor should it be forgotten, but the rather affectionately remembered, that Queen Mary II. of England was for many years the wife of a Dutch Stadtholder; that during her stay in Holland, in all likelihood, her woman's heart was touched by the infinite tenderness and solicitude shown by the Dutch for destitute and orphan children, and that she was the first patroness of charity schools in London.

Throwing any theological proclivities of mine to the winds, the driver of the carriage was plainly determined that I should go to church that Sunday at Delft, quite disregarding a hint that he should put up at some decent inn, for it was bitterly cold, and I felt as hollow as the pneumatic tube. He drove through a series of dull streets, very closely resembling those of Reading, in Berkshire, to the Oude Kerk, a great rambling barn of a place, and gave me clearly to understand that I must see the tombs first, and that he would be very glad to drink my health afterwards. Goodness gracious! what a fate is this interminable bone-grubbing! Better to be committed to the "Tombs" at New York, where at least they heat the cells in winter time, than to be bound to wander about these cold, cold sepulchres, shivering and shaking like a ghoul without a great coat. There is nothing pictorially so ugly as the interior of a Dutch church, except, perhaps, the Refuge for the Destitute, in Playhouse Yard, Barbican; and

that admirable institution is by night thoroughly warmed. There is nothing so cold as a Dutch church except the interior of a huge opera-house in the interval between the bankruptcy of one tenant and the incoming of another with a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. During service every worshipper who can afford it provides himself or herself with a *vuurstoof*, a square perforated box, containing an earthen pan full of hot turf embers. Hundreds of these fire-boxes are piled up in the aisle, ready to be let out on hire; and so you may see them, piled up, on canvas, in the paintings of Steenwyck, and De Hooghe, and Vanderwerf. But a painted *vuurstoof* wont warm one any more than a *vuurstoof* with the fire out between the services.

A janitor, with a huge bunch of keys, stumped from one end to the other of this huge Oude Kerk, which in everything save the article of whitewash is very much out of repair. He showed us the tomb of Admiral Van Tromp, with the swaggering epitaph—not too swaggering, perhaps, considering the manner in which Van T. beat us—and that surprising *alto rilievo* representation of the sea fight which took place between Scheveningen and the mouth of the Maes, in which the old sea-dog was not victorious and was killed. "A sea-fight cut in marble, with the smoke the best expressed that ever I saw in my life," says Mr. Pepys. I wish the smoke had come from some smouldering turf; it might have warmed a man somewhat. Subsequently I saw the mausoleum of Admiral Piet Hein, who captured the

Spanish silver fleet; and the tomb of the naturalist, Leeuwenhoek. After this the janitor began to talk about the great organ, upon which I fairly ran away out of the church, and never stopped till I brought up at the sign of the "Keiser van Morok," a *caffé-huis*.

My condition slightly improved by restoratives, I went afterwards to see the Prinsenhof, once the convent of St. Agatha, and now converted into a barrack, in which is the identical staircase which William Prince of Orange was about to ascend when he was shot by Gerard. It was on the 10th of July, 1584, and just after dinner. Three holes in the wall are supposed to be the orifices made by the three poisoned bullets after they had passed through the stout leathern doublet and stouter heart of that wise and good prince. Eight times before had the Jesuits tried to murder him. This time they succeeded. "My God, have pity on me and this poor people!" murmured this brave Protestant just before he died; and the Dutch have done pretty well under the House of Orange since 1584, and are about the unlikeliest people in Europe, I should say, ever to go back to Rome.

CHAPTER IX.

AMSTERDAM—THE "HET PALAIS"—JAN STEEN'S FÊTE OF ST. NIKOLAAS.

THE fastidious old lady who shrank from being betrayed into indecorousness of utterance, even in geographical nomenclature, always spoke of the chief city of Holland as Amster—ahem. In no verbal slur, however, but in the addition of a single letter, do I take refuge, in calling the moistest town in the world Amsterdamp.

The Americans found out, during the war, somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico a dreadful torrid place where there was no shade, where you were baked all day long by the inexorable sun, and where the only visitors were turtle, who came to lay their eggs in the sand, curse the Corporation of London, and gaze with wakeful eyes upon the exile, as though they were thinking "You will be done brown to-morrow." This penitential oven, which grew quite fashionable as a place of deportation for Secesh ladies and Copperhead conspirators, was called the "Dry Tortugas." Its very name was supposed to be suggestive of horror to the disloyal mind; but, ah! after a course of the humidity

of Amsterdam, how gladly would a victim of political dissensions have welcomed the prospect of being hung out to dry at the Tortugas!

Amsterdam is upon the river Ij (pronounced eye). With greater propriety it should be on the Ouse (pronounced Ooze). The Zuyder Zee should be that estuary known as the Wash. The whole city, indeed, is productive of the impression of having just come home from the laundress — of having been boiled, scrubbed, wrung, soaped, and starched; but *not* mangled or aired. Its two hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants all seem to have a cold in their heads. The entire city—its houses, quays, canals and sluices—have been ravished from the sea, and are founded on piles. Even when you do strike earth, it is only shifting bog and quicksand; and deeper and deeper through this must your piles be driven before you can hope to get a firm foundation. Forty years ago the immense corn warehouse originally constructed for the Dutch East India Company, and containing seventy thousand hundredweight of grain, sank bodily — the supporting piles having given way—into the mud, and disappeared for aye—like the Master of Ravenswood, or that warrior described in Guicciardini's annals, the weight of whose armour in a battle caused him to sink into a morass and be thenceforth lost to human ken. He was the only soldier who came to grief in the engagement; but the historian forgets to add that, but for the laws of gravity

and a fortuitous interposition of old red sandstone, he would have gone on sinking and sinking until he came out at Sydney Cove, Australia, to the dire amazement of sundry aborigines fishing for wombats with boomerangs.

There is as much, in fact, of Amsterdam below as there is above the surface, and it must have cost in the long run far more money to lay the foundations than to build the houses which have been reared upon them. The capital of Holland may be regarded as a plucky and, all things considered, a judicious investment. Huge sums have been sunk in the mud; the borrowing powers of the company have been indefinitely augmented; many a time the undertaking has been within an inch of being swamped; the original shareholders—who must have been frogs or beavers—could have got very little for their outlay; but the work has prospered at last, like the great enterprise which brought pure water from Hertfordshire to Islington, and, after ruining its promoter, pays now-a-days fabulous dividends. That is the way of the world. Sir Hugh Myddelton died without a sou; but a New River share in 1866 is as precious as a blue diamond.

Erasmus when he came to Amsterdam made a joke about its peculiarities, considerably heavier than the foundations thereof. In allusion to the piles, he said that he had reached a city where the inhabitants, like crows, lived at the tops of trees. Mr. Ruskin might surely add a Dutch Will-o'-the-wisp to his "Lamps" of

celestial hue. Who would not wish to hear him discourse on the "Logs of Amsterdam, beginning with the slime stories"? The guide-books boldly assert that Amsterdam is the "most wonderful city in the world!" The guide-books forget Venice, and they have not been re-edited, perchance, since Chicago was screwed up six feet above the normal level; or since Scrippville, Indiana, was shunted away a mile and a quarter to the south-west, in order that advantage might be taken of a newly-acquired water privilege. St. Petersburg also is as marvellous a city, structurally speaking, as Amsterdam; its palaces, quays, and arsenals are all built on piles. If they are repairing the roadway, and you peep into the excavation made by the workmen, you see the black stagnant water within a couple of feet of the pavement; and the fact is the stranger, as, within a day's journey, the Czar Peter could have got thousands of acres of dry firm land whereon to build his capital. But Czar Peter had not ceased from being Piet Baas, the shipbuilder of Zaandam. He had been evidently fascinated by his sojourn among that amphibious race who have said to the sea, "Our cows shall crop herbage on your bed," and to the sand, "We will build summer-houses and smoke pipes upon you;" who have forced water to turn wheels, and then coerced wheels into expelling water; who have chained up the wind as though it were a Samson, and made Boreas grind corn and Æolus chop firewood. Easy to understand how the Dutchman's doings could fascinate and

rouse to emulation the great, strong, obstinate Czar of Muscovy. All over Holland you see not only continual evidence of patient industry, unflagging perseverance, unsurpassed skill, but of indomitable volition and determination. The trader with the Indians who—stamping in one scale while the other was full of furs—laid it down as an axiomatic rule that a Dutchman's foot weighed ten pounds, and would never do business on any other terms, has served as a model for many succeeding generations of Dutchmen. Mynheer Van Damp is always stamping with his foot. He has stamped down tier after tier of logs into the treacherous morass, and made himself at last a wooden concrete, and built palaces thereupon. He has stamped his foot on the seashore, and looking out at the shoals and the bar, has muttered, "Thus far will I go, *and ever so much farther.*" It is a pity—considerations of national honour apart—that the Dutch did not make a permanent lodgment in our waters when they came up the Medway in Mr. Pepys' time. They would have built a stadt-house and museum on the Goodwins, and laid out the Isle of Dogs as a zoological garden.

Murray, who is, as a rule, very accurate and trustworthy, and in a hundred respects a joy and consolation to travellers, falls into a slight error when he tells us that "the approach to Amsterdam, over causeways traversing a broad expanse of water, resembles that which leads to Mexico." The city of Amsterdam is close to the sea, and has no rising ground within forty

miles of it that is higher than Holborn Hill; whereas the city of Mexico is situated three hundred miles inland, at the foot of two of the loftiest mountains in the world. The causeway by which Mexico was approached three hundred years ago has long since disappeared; the lake which surrounded it, and the canals which intersected it, in the days of Montezuma, have been dried up for centuries, and replaced by sandy roads or gardens full of flowers; and the great complaint throughout the valley of Mexico is not of "a broad expanse of water," but of the deficiency of that element and the want of irrigation. Murray's scribe must have thought that the Mexico of Mr. Prescott and Mr. Helps—the Mexico of Cortes and *la Noche Triste*—was identical with the dry and dusty capital of the Emperor Maximilian. There is about as much similarity between modern Mexico and Amsterdam as between St. Albans and Agrigentum.

Fully, however, do I recognise the impropriety of describing what Amsterdam is *not* like. With as rapid a pencil as I can command, let me endeavour to describe what it *is* like. The ground plan of the city has been compared to a half-bent bow, the chord being the line of the figure, and the arc the boundary on the land side. It has also been likened to the cross-section of an onion, the canals representing the parallel curves. By parity of comparison, it might likewise be said to resemble the moiety of a crinoline skirt; in any case it is a half-moon shaped city—not a crescent moon

with horns, but in that phase when Luna approaches more nearly the semblance of the half of a flat Edam cheese. Round the curvilinear part of the city runs a wide ditch. Concentric to this are four great canals lined by tall and stately houses, and generally choked with galliots and barges. Innumerable baby canals intersect the city in every direction, and so almost every Amsterdammer has some dull "little isle of his own" to dwell in. In winter time the water in these canals gently permeates through every surrounding object, and gives you chills, rheumatism, catarrh, and the ague; in summer it stinks, ferments, and is provocative of malaria, dysentery, and low fever. That every available acre of land should be cut up in bars like a watery gridiron is, however, considered essential to the prosperity of Holland. Take away his canals from a Dutchman, and he would die.

It is scarcely credible, but it is not less a fact, that when this people of excavators established themselves in the island of Manhattan, three of whose sides are surrounded by a noble bay and two handsome rivers, and the fourth by a no means contemptible stream, the Harlem, they set to work, so soon as they could keep the Indians and the Swedes at a respectful distance, to dig canals across the island. Canal Street, New York, a handsome thoroughfare full of drapers' shops and shipbrokers' counting-houses, was once a Dutch *gracht* on the approved Amsterdam model, and ships and barges came up to the very middle of Broadway.

It may be considered fortunate that the English took possession of New Amsterdam in Charles II.'s time. Another century of Dutch domination, and the island of Manhattan would have been cut up into five hundred morsels.

Was it from the Chinese the Hollanders learnt this mania for canal making? The worst of these wet ditches at Amsterdam is that, being no more than eight feet deep, they cannot admit vessels of heavy burdens, and that their beds are thick with mud, emitting a most noxious effluvium. The canals are occasionally flushed and scoured by an elaborate but not very expeditious process, the great trouble in all matters aquatic in Holland being not to let water in, but to keep the sea-water out. At high water, the sluice gates which admit the river Amstel into the town are closed for a short time, and the sea-water allowed to circulate through the canals. But if the sluices were not very speedily re-opened, and the sea expelled by the river, there would be the deuce to pay.

Looking at Amsterdam from a purely sanitary point, it would clearly be a very sensible step to fill up all the small canals. A number of broad and handsome streets would be thereby created, and a congested traffic relieved. At present the main thoroughfares, such as the Kalvess Straat, and the Warmoess Straat, are almost impassable for carriages; and the scarcity of conveyances has given rise to the ridiculous travellers' tale that the use of wheeled vehicles is prohibited by

the police, lest their rumbling over the stones should shake and injure the foundations of the houses. The imaginative tourist who invented this legend must surely have been an ancestor of the Yankee who declared that he never came within ten miles of Niagara without all his false teeth beginning to rattle in his jaws through the reverberation of the Falls.

Amsterdam contains a number of really magnificent public buildings; but as a city it is not nearly so handsome or imposing in appearance as the Hague. You may cluster together, I take it, any number of big domes, towering columns, and stately façades; but so sure as you mix them up with ships and lighters, with casks of merchandize, with "characters" in woollen nightcaps and canvas breeches, your picture will assume a "'long shore," Custom House, Ratcliffe Highway aspect—that is to say, an undignified one. The odour of pitch and tar is fatal to the sublime. Steamers hissing and spurting, fishing smacks and colliers unloading between the Pont Royal and the Pont Neuf would be the ruin of that glorious Long Gallery of Francis I., the old Louvre. And who would wish to bring Westminster Abbey down to Wapping? The Tower just contrives to overawe the ships in the Pool; but knock its four turrets away, and it would be no more sublime than a bonding warehouse. Bring Cronstadt up to St. Petersburg, and the stately sweep of that city of palaces would be lost for ever. It is only the amphitheatrical background that lends dignity to

the Golden Horn; and once land in Constantinople, you will find that it is all background, and nothing else. Again, the meanest and shabbiest part of New York is that near the bay and the piers. It is only far up town, towards the Central Park, that the city begins to be architecturally sumptuous. Need I do more than hint, either, that the approach to Liverpool, as you pass mile after mile of those dun brick dead walls of docks, like waterside gaols, is, to say the least, infinitely dismal and uninteresting?—while, higher up, the great city of the Mersey possesses, in the Brown Library, the St. George's Hall, and the façade to the Lime Street station, a group of edifices not surpassed in nobility by any that Palladio ever drew.

I make two exceptions to the rule laid down. There are two cities, Genoa and Venice, from whose architectural beauty no ships, no barges, no casks or bales, no "waterside characters" can detract one whit. The Custom-house at Venice might be the Pleasure Dome that Kubla Khan decreed in Xanadu. The back lanes of Genoa are full of austerely-gorgeous palaces which all the noise, and dirt, and stenches of an Italian Rotherhithe cannot rob of their grandeur. You see that the Mediterranean and the Adriatic have been eternally endowed with an element in which the cities of the North and West are bankrupt. That element is called colour. Colour corrects, compensates for, covers up everything that is mean and squalid and dingy under a pall of rainbow hues. The Palais at Amsterdam, for

instance, is really a finer building than the Dogana, or even than San Giorgio Maggiore, although the professors of Art cant will doubtless say that it is not; just as the façade of Goldsmiths' Hall, pent up behind the Post Office in London, is certainly not surpassed by any part of the restored Louvre; but, for lack of colour, both look mean, cold, uncomfortable, and almost vulgar.

Let us pass into this said palace of Amsterdam, which is situated very appropriately on a square of some pretentions, called The Dam. The *Het Palais* was formerly the *Stadt Huis*, or Hôtel de Ville, and was built when the Republic of the United Netherlands was at the apogee of its power and prosperity, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Louis Bonaparte thought it too grandiose to be used for the meetings of burgomasters, the trials of criminals, the adjudication of bankrupts, and the like. The municipality of Amsterdam were fain to find another mansion-house; and during Louis' short reign, Van Campen's enormous edifice became his royal residence. From his windows, if we are to believe sundry candid Red Republican critics of a later generation, the quiet, nervous King of the Dutchmen could hear itinerant ballad-singers bawling out ribald couplets about himself, his Queen Hortense, Admiral Verhuel, and the Berlin and Milan decrees.

"Le roi de Hollande
Fait de la contrebande;
Et Madame sa mie
Fait des faux Louis."

It seems to have escaped the notice of the Red Republican critics that the Dutch ballad-mongers bawl their couplets *in Dutch*; and that, as not one in twenty thousand of the common people speaks French, their satire must have fallen somewhat flat on the Bavarian ear. If this wretched stuff was really ever published, it was probably the composition of some spiteful French creature in King Louis's own household. Do you know who wrote the most abusive songs and the filthiest libels against poor Marie Antoinette, and gave them to the ballad-singers to be howled in the *carrefours* of Versailles? Do you know who wrote "La Belle Bourbonnaise," that French "Lillibulero"? Not the Marats, and Heberts, and Barbaroux of the day, but the powdered and perfumed and periwigged courtiers of the *Œil de Bœuf*. The insensates! They were but making rods for their own backs. Ere long came a refrain to the "Bourbonnaise," which was called the "Carmagnole," and which was of the people's own making, and of their singing and dancing to boot.

Whenever the present king comes to Amsterdam, which he does once a year, in the month of June, he takes up his quarters in the Het Palais, holds levées, gives state dinners and a court ball there; so that the vast old pile—it is built on fourteen thousand other piles driven seventy feet deep into the sand—has still an odour of regality. It has plenty of regal furniture in rather a seedy condition, and a staff of servants in the royal livery. They make you pay for seeing the

Het Palais, as indeed they do for seeing anything in this country—from a picture gallery to a curing-house for red herrings; but at Amsterdam the thing is managed with some decency and even dignity, and the show is fully worth the guilder which it costs. The obtrusive and monotonously garrulous *laquais de place* is not allowed to enter the royal apartments. He fires his old feet at a stove in the porter's lodge, and refreshes himself with snuff while you are handed over to a plump, well-shaven person in a handsome livery, who, after you have paid for your ticket, takes charge of you and bows you through the saloons, discoursing on the treasures they contain, in a calm, subdued voice. You might fancy him a kind of chamberlain. The gentleman who bowed us through spoke four languages. He seemed to know as much about the history of Europe as Sir Archibald Alison—and probably knew a great deal more. At least he did not tell us that "Sir Peregrine Pickle" was present at the funeral of Admiral von Speyt.

The sculptured bas-reliefs in purest white marble—they are by Arthur Quellin—which cluster thick in almost every room in the Het Palais, are superb. The figures are excellent enough; but such fruit, such flowers, such leaves, such Indian corncobs, such birds and butterflies, and blades of grass, and buttercups and daisies all cut from the solid stone, I never saw before—no, not even in wood, and from Grinling Gibbons's sure and delicate hand. Scarcely less notice-

able are the panels covered with sham *alti* and *bassi rilievi* in monochrome. It is almost impossible to believe that some of these are executed on a flat surface. It is very tiresome, however, to have to listen to the extravagant eulogiums passed on what is, after all, only a clever deception and *trompe l'œil*. I think there is some painting of the kind in the chapel at Greenwich Hospital; and you have all seen the wonderful sham bas-reliefs painted by Abel de Puzol on the coffered ceiling of the Bourse at Paris. How many breakfasts and baskets of Burgundy at the Café de la Bourse have been won and lost in bets as to the reality of those ingenious delusions!

The Great Hall of Justice, one of the noblest chambers, and admirably adapted to its original design, has been converted into a ball-room, and huge chandeliers covered up in canvas bags hang now where once were suspended only dim lamps, that contained just oil enough to light the advocate as he conned his brief, and the judge as he read the sentence, and sent this rascal to the whipping-post, and that rogue to the rasp-house. Some very suggestive bas-reliefs, too, in which Justice assisted by the Furies, the Fates, and sundry attendant demons, is putting malefactors through a course of wholesole discipline have been covered up. One cannot quarrel with their concealment in any European palace. It would be truly shocking in the intervals of the "Lancers" to gaze upon a sculptured representation of the breaking of a coiner on the wheel: and the *cavalier*

seul in a quadrille might well falter at beholding opposite to him the effigy of a gentleman in marble, and in high relief, hanging by the neck.

In every room, great and small, from the presence chamber to the King's closet, there is a glorious old chimney-piece, often of the rarest marbles, often fifteen to twenty feet high, the towering frieze of the mantel covered with elaborate carvings, and supported by pillars of jasper and porphyry, with highly enriched capitals. Those grand chimney-pieces at Hampton Court will just give you an idea—but a very faint one—of the splendour of those in the State Palace. But what has become of the chimneys themselves, in which the storks were said to build their nests? What has become of the ample hearth, and the huge bronze fire-dogs, and the ingle-nook, lined with Dutch tiles? What has become of the cheerful blaze before which, in high-backed chairs of velvet and carved oak, the stately burgomasters sat in solemn doublets and more solemn ruffs, and great gold chains round their necks, holding between their fingers and thumbs tall glasses, so that the bright rich Rhine wine within caught the glow of the fire and threw out a hundred merry sparkles; while by the side of these sedately jolly mynheers there would stand buxom ladies, in whose robes of rich white satin the hues from the hearth were reflected; and, if we are to believe Terburg and Van der Helst—and those Dutch painters were solid men and scorned to lie—the buxom ladies in white satin sometimes con-

descended to sit on the very knees of the sedate mynheers, and take a sip from the brimming beaker of Rhine wine; little Hans or Piet the page sitting in the ingle-nook hard by, and playing merry airs on the large-stomached viol. What has become of *them?* Alas! the chimney-pieces remain, like the tombstones of a bygone age of good-fellowship; but the chimneys have been bricked up, the hearth is cold, the ingle-nook is deserted, the fire-dogs bend no more beneath their crackling load. In the palace, as in the cottage, all through Holland, the cheerful blaze has been replaced by the meagre, piping, churlish, cheerless stove.

The king's audience chamber is very interesting. It contains a number of tattered banners, some captured from the Spaniards and some from us; and also a remarkably rickety and worm-eaten old throne, into the faded velvet at the back of which is worked, in tarnished gold, the representation of a huge human eye. The court servant said it was the eye of Justice. Let us hope that it was the eye of Conscience, which sees right through thrones and kings and courtiers; the eye that Victor Hugo tells us about in *La Légende des Siècles.*

There is a very curious aroma of the French Empire about the State Palace. The orange has been prevalent here for fifty years; but the vestiges of the Imperial bees are not to be eradicated. Here and there a new carpet has been laid down, or a big picture by a modern Dutch artist put up; but nine-tenths of the

furniture was evidently brought to Holland by Louis Bonaparte, and has never been renewed. It is of the unmistakable *style Empire*—the sham-Greek-sham-Roman *rococo* but delightful upholstery of the epoch of Jupiter-Scapin. Those long-legged chairs and slippery tables, those prim looking-glasses and monumental escritoires, those gilt tripods and griffin-clawed foot-stools, those awful clocks surmounted by the ormolu groups representing the Sacrifice of Iphigenia and the Judgment of Paris—all these are Napoleonic. As you gaze on these relics of the Imperial past, the dim cold rooms become peopled with the phantoms of the year Seven; wonderful warriors in dolmans and brandenbourgs and scarlet boots; wonderful dandies in pea-green coats with swallow tails, cravats reaching to their cheek bones, nankeen pantaloons, and striped silk stockings; wonderful chamberlains in hair powder and kerseymere, and coats rigid with gold embroidery; wonderful ladies with no bustles, waists underneath their arms, pearl necklaces, and blue kid shoes with sandals. Here comes the diffident, nervous, uncommunicative Louis, who would have made an admirable assistant librarian in the British Museum, a capital secretary to the British Orphan Asylum, an invaluable curator of Sir John Soane's collection, anything, in fact, but a king with Timour the Tartar for a brother at the Tuileries yonder. And see, as a phantom band begins to play an air called "Partant pour la Syrie," there approaches the most beautiful woman of her age,

the gentle, accomplished, kind-hearted Hortense. The time slips away. 'Tis the year Ten; and the Queen of Holland holds by the hand a royal little boy. They show you now, at the State Palace, the window where his nurse used to hold him that he might look out on the crowd on the Dam. They tell a story that on the eve of the Christmas feast of St. Nicholas, when it is the kindly Dutch custom to overwhelm children with toys, one of the Court ladies at this same window asked him what kind of present he would like to have. It was very damp that day, and very muddy on the Dam, and the royal little boy stammered forth, "*Laissez moi jouer dans cette belle boue.*" To disport himself in that beautiful puddle was the highest ambition of the baby Prince. He has longed for other things since, and has got his desire: he is Napoleon the Third, Emperor of the French.

Of course, if your æsthetic susceptibilities are not shocked at the fact of the museum of pictures being in the Trippenhuis, a mansion situated on the Klooerniers-burgwal—what a combination!—you will proceed there, and become more and more enraptured with the glories of the Dutch school of painting. Here you shall see Van der Helst's gigantic picture crowded with figures, all the size of life and all portraits, and which has been termed, somewhat grandiloquently, "the miracle of the Dutch school." This extraordinary performance, which is a perfect dictionary of mediæval costumes, armour, weapons, furniture, manners, and

customs, represents the city guard of Amsterdam, met to celebrate the signature of the Treaty of Munster—a document which first fully confirmed the independence of the Dutch Republic. The date is 1648. The curious in culinary matters may gather that at this period, although dishes were plentiful, plates were deemed somewhat effeminate accessories to a banquet, and that the use of forks was very little known. So at least we are entitled to assume from the remarkably free-and-easy style of gastronomy adopted by one of the heaviest "swells" among the city guard, a corpulent personage in a gorgeously laced doublet, who has got hold of a ham bone, and with a countenance expressive of much internal contentment is paring pieces off it with his dagger. There is a tremendous quantity of Rhine wine going about, in very high shouldered glasses; and, not to put too fine a point upon it, it would seem that the celebrants of the Treaty of Munster are in a cheerful way to getting excessively drunk. I may be in error; but I fancy that I can discern in a corner of the picture a certain Protestant champion, who has long served under Gustavus Adolphus—a doughty Scottish captain, by the name of Dugald Dalgetty, who has come over to the Low Countries to have a carouse with his friends the Mynheers. The captain has made with his dudgeon-haft tremendous inroads into a peacock-pie, that might have been painted by Weenix, and has, at present, his nose deep in a flagon of something that ends in *heim*.

But I must not be seduced into abortive essays at art criticism. What have I to do with the "Correggiosity of Correggio," or the Vanhelsterism of Van der Helst? Behind me, then, I bid the temptation go that would lead me to discourse on Gerard Douw's exquisite "Evening School;" on Carl Du Jardin's famous "Five Governors of the Spinhouse"—which the French call "Les cinq Echevins vêtus de noir;" on Paul Potter's exquisite "Landscape with Cattle," which is yet a picture five thousand miles behind the "Bull;" on Rembrandt's "Night Watch," the *real* "Night Watch," of which there is a paltry copy in Trafalgar Square; on Ruysdael's peerless "Waterfall;" on Schalken's "William the Third by candlelight"—he would have painted a sunrise by candlelight; or on the hundred other masterpieces which this gallery, rich to bursting with art riches, contains.

One picture alone do I reserve myself the right of talking about somewhat more in detail; for its subject bears directly on the present season of the year, and on the actual aspect not only of Amsterdam, but of every town and village in the kingdom of the Netherlands. This is the "Feast of St. Nikolaas," by Jan Steen. St. Nikolaas is, I know not why—not having my 'Alban Butler' by me—the patron saint of children. On the night of the 25th of December in every year he is supposed to come down every Dutch chimney after the little ones have gone to bed, and to deposit in their shoes his presents for the New Year. To good

little boys and girls he brings toys, picture books, cakes, and sweetmeats; to those who have been but indifferently behaved he brings nothing at all; while in the boots and shoes of the absolutely naughty ones he leaves sundry bunches of birchen twigs tied together with red ribbon, finding which the next morning stern parents proceed to administer them externally to the intended recipients. Jan Steen's picture tells this story, and nothing more. The scene is a comfortable Dutch interior. The foreground is heaped with huge cakes of gingerbread, sticks of jam and lollipops, fasces of sugarsticks. There is a little lass in the centre, her face radiant, her arms full of the dolls and cockhorses which the kindly Sint Nikolaas has placed in her tiny shoe. The baby, even, has got its gift, and is crowing in the arms of a good-natured brother, who is pointing out the very identical spot on the hearth where the saint alighted. But what has been the Christmas-box of that big, lubberly boy, with the flap hat and the baggy knickerbockers, who has already begun to blubber, and, feeling premonitory twinges, already begins to rub the hinder portion of his waistband? Ah! woful carle! Ah! dunce or truant doomed to terrific expiation! Nemesis Sint Nikolaas has you at last. An elderly sister, of solemn mien, holds out towards him a clouted shoe, from which sprout the direful sprays of the birchen garland. The brothers and sisters do not pity this unhappy lout. I am sorry to say they are grinning at his misfortune. His venerable mother draws

aside the curtains of a bed, and beckons to him. His aged father, sitting in the chimney-corner, and soon to assume the part of lictor, regards him with stern, sad eyes. This is the end of shirking school, and making faces at the Blue Bedel of the *oüde kirk*, and playing odd and even with rude Dutch boys.

This picture of Jan Steen's is emphatically a splendid one—splendid in its drawing, execution, and frank, bold handling, and the racy, genial humour that pervades it. It is a big picture, too, for Jan, and very rich and harmonious in colour. I know one English painter who would have made a pendant to the "Feast of Sint Nikolaas," although he never went to Holland. He flourished about seventy years after Jan Steen, and his name was William Hogarth.

Go down into the street, walk all over Amsterdam; remember what you saw yesterday at the Hague, and the day before at Rotterdam, and you will see that the Dutch have changed but very little since the days of Jan Steen: Sint Nikolaas is everywhere; huge coloured cartoons represent him, in gorgeous cope and mitre and crozier, riding on a milk-white steed, whose crupper and saddlebows are all hung with toys and sweetmeats; while behind him, on a savage black mule, rides Pietermann, his *knecht*, the terror of naughty children, who bears aloft a very Birnam Wood of birchbrooms. Sint Nikolaas in chocolate, in barley-sugar, in toffee, in almond rock, and in gingerbread, is in every window; and the shops are absolutely gorged with dolls, cock-

horses, lambs that squeak, monkeys that run up poles, and cats that dolorously do "mew." It was curious, moving through this great Christmas fair, and looking at the children with their happy faces, trotting along, laden with toys, to remember that two years ago, thousands of miles away, across a great ocean, I had as it were a passing whiff of Sint Nikolaas. To the good-natured and kind-hearted people of New York, the saint is known as Sante Claus. He, too, comes down the chimney, but on the thirty-first of December, not on the twenty-fifth, and his guerdon is a New Year's gift and not a Christmas box. This is the transatlantic version of the good old Dutch custom. The presents of Sante Claus are placed in the stockings, not in the shoes, of the children; and let me hasten to mention that the American saint is never accompanied by that horrid Pietermann, with his Birnam Wood of birchbrooms. In the United States children are never supposed to be naughty.

CHAPTER X.

THE CLEAN VILLAGE OF BROCK.

ONE of the wittiest things that, perhaps, ever appeared in the pages of *Punch* was a brief commentary on an advertisement with which some pertinacious upholsterer used, years ago, to worry the public well-nigh to death:—"To Persons about to Marry." "*Don't*," said celibatarian *Punch*. It is not unlikely that the bachelor-cynic may have changed his opinions by this time; for matrimony, like learning to dance, is the thing which most people begin by sneering at, and end—as their fathers ended before them. In a similar spirit Albert Smith used to wind up a long string of hints addressed to intending continental travellers, by advising them to stay at home; while, as you know, the handbooks of games which profess to teach you all that can be learnt about whist and loo, cribbage and all-fours, usually contain, on the title-page, a brief caveat against touching cards at all. I have all this ghostly counsel in my mind when I approach the subject of my present chapter, and I begin by saying to you earnestly, frankly, pathetically, "Don't go to the clean village of Brock." "And why," you may ask, "being at

Amsterdam, should we not pay a visit to a place to which all the world has been?" I answer, very plainly, "Because the village of Brock is a bore, and a delusion, and a sham, and isn't half so clean as Shepherd's Bush.

I know you wont follow my advice. I know that so soon as ever you are installed at Brock's Hotel in the Dodenstraat or the "Oude Bible" in the Warmocostraat, and have done your Het Palais and your Trippenhuis, you will charter a carriage and be off to Brock; and that my warning voice will be, once heard, no more remembered than the "don't touch any champagne" of the doctor to the recent invalid who is going to dine at Francatelli's and is addicted to dry sillery. At the principal show-house in the clean village—I shall continue, for mere conformity's sake, to call it by its usurped and unmerited name—there is a woman with a face like unto that of one of the highly-trained steeds in the Elgin Marbles. "*Mozzoo, Mataame!*" this dreadful person will cry, in tones much more closely resembling a neigh than the human voice divine, "*Mozzoo, Mataame, regardez libre.*" You will look at the book, which is as big and as dirty as a parish registry, and find it a kind of Court Directory of all nations. It bulges wide as a church door with visiting cards. People have come from all parts of the world to inscribe their names in this monstrous ledger. The four, the five quarters of the globe are all represented here—the Creole Don and the Circassian Prince,

the Moldo-Wallachian Boyar, and the Croatian Ban; your doctor, your lawyer, and your tailor; the Bishop of your diocese; the Marquis of Farintosh, Mr. and Mrs. Podsnap; General Tom Thumb, Madame Malibran, Victor Hugo, Sir Edwin Landseer, the Sheriff of Middlesex, Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs, and the Lord No Zoo—all have deposited their glazed or ivory pasteboard, their copperplate names and addresses.

You are above such frivolities. But how is it that all these people—fashionable people, clever people, shrewd people, people of the world—have never warned their friends and acquaintances at home that there is little to see at Brock, and that what little is visible is not worth paying at least a guinea for seeing? Ah! a very slight knowledge of human nature will supply the answer to that question. When, at the fair, you have paid twopence to see the mermaid; when, at the Dramatic College Fête, at the Crystal Palace, Mr. Addison or Mr. Toole, most seductive of showmen, has wheedled you out of an additional sixpence to inspect the wonderful "What is it," do you, as you come down the steps of the show a sadder and a wiser man, habitually inform the public who are preparing to walk up and pay their twopences, that the mermaid is a swindle, and the "What is it" a——, never mind what it is? Not at all. Arm-in-arm with your friend, M. de la Rochefoucauld, you withdraw into a sly corner, and rub your hands as you watch the crowd of dupes swarming into the booth; and as they come down

again, with rueful faces and empty pockets, you admit with a chuckle that there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends not wholly displeasing to us. We are told in "Hudibras" that the pleasure is as great in being cheated as to cheat; but there is another pleasure which approaches ecstasy, that of seeing somebody else cheated.

All this, nevertheless, resolves itself into the *cui bono*. Being at Amsterdam, you will naturally go to Brock. I know you will: Go, then, and get your eyes winked. If you are mulct in a dozen guilders, why shouldn't the rest of the tourist world pay as much or more for the operation? Oculists must live. Let us continue, then, paying them their fees, even unto the Third Cataract, and then find ourselves as blind as seven-day puppies. Even Bolander admitted that a visit to the dear village of Brock was a perfectly remunerative outlay of cash. "Zaandam is cleanerer," says Bolander. "Twenty village I take you to, not cost a stuyver, is cleanerest. But what can man do? It like not going up de Righi, not going up de Pyramid. Not worth de money. Tire you to death. Yet, must go. What they say in England if you not go? Carriage ready, sure at ten o'clock to-morrow. Must start early; take four hours to do Brock comfortable."

Thus Bolander: "*What will they say in Engand?*" Ay, there's the rub. It inspires the warrior in distant climes to deeds of desperate valour; but it likewise goads the silly tourist to do as other simpletons have

done before him. Mind, I do not put forward any egotistical claims to simplicity. If I am a martyr to circumstance, my martyrdom is self-sought. If the epidermis of my nose is to be removed by violent friction, I brought that organ of my own volition to the grindstone. If mine is the vile body on which experiments are to be made, 'twas I who sold my remains to the surgeons. Nobody asked me to place my hands on the metal balls, and I have only myself to thank for the agony of the galvanic shock. Bolander knew all this, and knew, too, that I knew it. I went to Brock with my eyes wide open, and stepped deliberately into the pit. You *must* go. There is here no possibility of following Sheridan's advice to his son Tom about saying that he had been down a coal-pit. The merest generalities will satisfy those who have not explored the recesses of the mine, and half an hour's cramming at a back volume of the *Penny Magazine* will throw those who have so explored it off their guard. The majority of amateurs who have descended coal-pits have inspected their subterranean wonders under the influence of extreme bodily terror, and are not afterwards in a condition to criticise very closely any statements made by others. But you can't cram the clean village of Brock. It is not a place to be coached up. It has no generalities. It is all detail; and the omission of a pot or a pan, or a cow's tail, would cause your immediate detection as an impostor by those who had really visited the clean village.

So I gave myself over, *sciemment*, as the Code Napoleon has it, into the hands of Bolander; and that tormentor took me, on perhaps the most bitterly nipping and cheerless morning that was ever known to occur in any month of December, to the tavern of the Nieuwe Stad's Herborg, which is a kind of Dutch Fox-under-the-Hill, supported on piles, of course, in the middle of the Ij. Here I waited half an hour in the cold for a ferry-boat, and was entertained by Bolander with anecdotes of defunct tourists. Bolander is a little man in a very long snuff-coloured coat, very trustworthy, highly recommended by the guide-book, and is to be heard of at Brack's in the Dockenstraat. He is immensely old, but very dry in appearance; at the which I am glad, for a double reason—first that there should be anything dry in this damp metropolis; next, that as Bolander has now reached the mummified stage, he will probably last an indefinite number of years longer. Bolander was Albert Smith's guide, and accompanied him up the Rhine. He speaks very affectionately of him; but is given darkly to insinuate that he and not A. S. wrote the major part of the Mont Blanc entertainment, and that but for him—Bolander—the Egyptian Hall would have been nowhere. Bolander also wrote Murray's "Guide-book to Holland and Northern Germany," and took that admirable series of photographs of Egypt and Nubia which were published, I believe, by Messrs. Negretti and Zambra—at least he was there when somebody else did. In

this modesty of self-assertion he reminded me of a communicative gentleman who officiated as *ober-kellner* at an hotel at Berlin some eight years ago, and who told me that his late Majesty King Frederick William IV. had been until four in the morning at the Carnival Ball at the Opera House. I stared somewhat at this announcement. "Yes," said the candid *ober-kellner*, "the King have supper in his box, and I wait upon him."

Bolander is the most travelled guide I have met with. He has been at it for fifty years. "I know my Egypt," he says, "I know my Spain, my Swisserland, my Rome (three times), my Medicarameans, my Yarmany, and my Russias; and I have been backward forward to Brock four time in one day, each time take different nation." I asked him if he ever took a holiday. "Once," he responded, "I go mit all my family by Rotterdam steamer to London for eight day. Ah! it was delightful time. We buy one little book, and we go about all de eight day and see de sights—de Tower, de Mint, de Bank, St. Paul, the Britons' Museum, de Madam Waxwork in Baker Street—everyting."

This concluding confidence of Bolander repaid me, I think, for all the trouble of coming to Holland in the middle of December. It was the one touch of nature that made the whole world kin. We have all heard of the waiter at the London Tavern, who, on the occasion of his monthly holiday, never failed to go and help a

friend of his who was a waiter at the Freemasons'. We all know that when an actor's name is out of the bill he goes in front and sees the performance; and I have been told that very rich tradesmen, retired from business, will solicit their sons and successors to be allowed to come down to the City for an hour or so every morning and serve in the shop. But just imagine this veteran guide, this *laquais* of a thousand *places*, making use of a solitary surcease from a fifty years' exhibition of palaces, museums, picture galleries, and show places, in gravely trotting out the lions of London. See what it is to be a true artist. Sivori, I daresay, has no greater pleasure than in listening to Joachim; Véfour used to dine, in disguise, at Beauvilliers; and it may be that Mr. Calcraft is occasionally waited upon by provincial practitioners, respectfully anxious to know how Tawell was finished off, and whether Hocker died game.

The ferry-boat which was remarkably like a very large tub with the washhouse boiler in the middle, and had a full cargo of cabbages—vegetables which, in a raw state and in winter time are but chilly and uncomfortable objects to look at—arrived at last, and conveyed us to the south point of Waterland, one-and-a-half mile from Buiksloot. Hence you can see the provinces both of North and South Holland, likewise the Zuyder Zee; and you have a well laid-out and not uninteresting panorama of the great city of Amsterdam capped by the domes of the Palace and the Lutheran

Kerk. It is a panorama worth looking at. It rather takes away your breath to think that these two hundred and sixty thousand human beings, these palaces, churches, prisons, hospitals, merchants' counting-rooms, shops, warehouses, dwellings—have no surer foundations than the trunks of trees stuck in the mud; that nothing but a few planks keeps them from the all-swallowing sea. "A ship is a prison, with the chance of being drowned," says the sneering moralist. For how many centuries have these brave Hollanders lain in a watery gaol, and yet how stubbornly free they are!

There is another tavern at Waterland where you hire the carriage which is to convey you to Brock and back again, a distance, say, of ten miles. For this you have to pay six guilders, with anything you please to the driver, who, of course, receives the smallest donation with thankfulness, but appears profoundly ignorant of the existence of any coin lower in denomination than a guilder. This ignorance is common with all persons in any way connected with the clean village. Everything costs a guilder that doesn't cost two. The cow-herds and the tavern-keepers, the dairymaids and the hostlers who wash the horses' mouths out, all have a lively and cheerful faith, in one-and-eightpence, but they are exceedingly sceptical with regard to any smaller currency.

It did not tend much to enliven one's spirits to perceive that the steeds harnessed to the rickety little britschka we had chartered were those paunchy, hollow-

backed, arched-necked, weak-kneed animals of sable hue and flowing manes and tails which in England are ordinarily attached to the stuffy hackney coach smeared with black varnish, in which, accoutred in a hideous masquerade dress of crape and bombazine, you follow to Kensal-green the remains of our dear brother departed. I suppose the mourning-coach horse came over to England with William III., but his family has not decreased in Holland. Every livery-stable keeper here seems, from his stud, to do "black work."

While these funeral prancers, who, like their brethren at home, had a great deal of action and nothing else, were being harnessed to the britschka, Bolander suggested that I should inspect the vast line of dams thrown up of late years, to check the influx of the sea at high tide into the Ij. The dam-keeper's little hut was visible, and his money-taker's box, whence he dispenses tickets at a guilder a head for the privilege of walking over the embankments. I declined patronising this entertainment, saying that I would see the dams—cut first. Upon my word I think the Dutch would exhibit the remains of their great grandmothers preserved in schiedam for money.

We passed numbers of summer-houses jutting out on piers into the muddy water where, in fine weather the mynheers come to smoke and drink, and sniff the refreshing gales of the odoriferous slush and the spicy ooze. Bolander pointed out a spot in the middle of the Ij where, in the revolutionary war, the Dutch fleet

lay, and where, the river being frozen, it was captured by a division of French cavalry and flying artillery. But I have heard more wonderful stories than that, Bolander. Did not Colonel Fremantle tell us once of a Yankee gunboat in the Rio Grande which, under the broiling heats of July, was captured by a squadron of Texan dragoons?

The road to Brock runs through the fattest of polders by the side of the Great Ship Canal of North Holland—a surprising work of hydraulic engineering, and extending upwards of fifty miles, right down to the Texel. By its means ships of the largest size and burthen can come up to Amsterdam. The canal and port dues are, however, very heavy, and a decided preference is shown by shipowners for the roomy Rotterdam, with its so easily accessible Boomjes. We saw one, a huge English barque, coming up the canal, and threatening our britschka with her terrible bowsprit. Just one gleam of home irradiated this dreary dun Dutch landscape as the *Charming Sally*, of Great Grimsby, sailed in a stately manner across our carriage window. I could see the burly English captain, pea-jacketed and red-comfortered, pacing the deck stamping and thrashing his broad chest with crossed arms, to keep himself warm; his English wife—he must have had good-natured owners—in plaid shawl and black bonnet, knitting by the capstan, a fat baby-boy sprawling and playing like a kitten with a ball of worsted at her feet; the great black ship's dog, like a lion couchant,

with his paws hanging idly over the taffrail—a sagacious supercargo he, knowing all about the *Charming Sally*, her tonnage, rating, charter-parties, bills of lading, and policies of insurance, and holding himself — that good and faithful servant — responsible for all, even for the barking at that little rascal of a cabin-boy when he does not behave himself. Little cabin-boy is just visible in the aperture of the companion-hatch, where he sits mending his trousers. Forward, a short-legged boatswain, with terrific whiskers and mahogany visage, is swearing at Jack or Tom in the rigging for a lazy, lubberly son of a sea-cook. I cannot hear his voice, but I am sure he is swearing, and that those are the words, with slight additions, he is using; he would not be a boatswain else. *Fouette cocher!* There is nothing on the field of vision now but willows and windmills; and so God speed the *Charming Sally*, of Great Grimsby, on her voyage.

The carriage pulls up at the door of an ugly wooden cottage, before which are collected a number of pairs of wooden shoes, as though this had been some inn at which the guests were in the habit of going to bed in the day-time. Is this Brock? No, says Bolander, but it is a dairy farm which everybody is expected to see. We alight, and passing the threshold find ourselves in what appears to me to be a remarkably dark, dirty, and ill-ventilated cowhouse. The cows seem in the reverse of good condition, and are huddled together in a manner which in England would provoke the cri-

ticism of the Government inspectors of nuisances. It is true that the tiled floor is made out here and there in a grotesque pattern, and that the cross-beams are smeared with coarse scroll work and gaudy hues, as though some mountebanks were about to give a performance. "You should come in summer," the dairy farmer says, with a deprecatory smile, seeing, I suppose, anything but admiration expressed in my countenance. I can understand as much Dutch as *that* amounts to; and in his deprecatory smile I read the whole mystery of the Brock imposture. The cows, then, are to be got up as a show in summer, for the visitors to stare at. In winter time they may wallow in this filthy lair. Of course I did not expect to see electro-plated mangers, or an alabaster drinking-tank, or rosewood buckets, or a small-tooth comb, an ivory-handled hair-brush, a pot of glycerine, and a bottle of eau de Cologne provided for each cow; but, after the tremendous fuss that has been made about these dairy farms in countless books of travel, I certainly did expect to find something more trim and coquettish than a murky den abounding in bad smells. The story about the cows' tails being tied up with blue ribbon I had long dismissed as an idle fable, although I should not be in the least surprised to hear that the show-people did resort to this mode of ornamentation during the summer season, when the visitors come; but I am free to confess that from one end of the stable to the other there does run a gutter; that above it, over each stall,

a hook is fastened to the ceiling, and that the cows' tails, in order that they may not dangle in the dirt, are tied up to these same hooks. I doubt, however, whether it is worth coming all the way to Brock to verify this not very important fact. My general impression on quitting this much-vaunted cowshed was that, at a not very remote period, it had been the property of a certain Mynheer Van Augeas, and that the work of the eminent sanitary reformer, Van Hercules, was not yet half concluded. The whole place would certainly have been much the better for a few buckets of cold water.

The farmer and his family lived under the same roof, and were separated only by a thin partition from the cowhouse. The kitchen came first, then a kind of best parlour or supping-room. Then a couple of cupboards —they were nothing more—with beds in them. These beds—with half-a-dozen mattresses, chintz curtains, gilt poles, quilted silk counterpanes, and coverlets of sham Brussels lace—were evidently couches of state; so that I was much puzzled in my mind to know where the family actually slept. On the floor? in some friendly cockloft? or among the cows? To show the exquisite cleanliness in which the furniture was kept, and to verify the saying about "eating your dinner off the deal-boards," the mid-day meal of which the family was partaking, and which I trust had not been hastily improvised, so soon as our carriage-wheels had become audible, was set forth on the table without any cloth,

plates, or dishes. A very nasty mess that mid-day meal seemed to be, consisting, so far as a hasty glance could show, of bits of stale bread and tablets of bubble-and-squeak which had been subjected to hydraulic pressure and then fried. I did not see any knives, forks, or spoons, and from this, and the fact that the family champed their jaws over their viands in a cheerless and mechanical manner, I was led to surmise that this might be, after all, not a real dinner, but a theatrical or pantomime meal, provided in pasteboard by the resident "property man," and made believe to be eaten whenever visitors came to Brock.

We were glad to pay a guilder and get away from this "gaff"—as sheer a gaff as any I ever paid a penny to see in the Whitechapel-road. Then we drove on to Brock itself, and had to leave our carriage at a little inn at the entrance, there being neither horse nor cart thoroughfare through the clean village. The common room of the inn was very like one in an American village, bare and comfortless—the table slopped with beer and gin, and the floor fertile in evidences that the citizens who came here were in the habit of smoking, and of expectorating a good deal when they smoked. There was a big billiard-table, covered with a cotton cloth; and this cloth—Bolander having neglected to say we were coming—they had neglected to wash. Or perhaps the inn at Brock is not one of the show-places of the clean village. An old woman was asleep over a spinning-wheel in one corner; the hostess was swabbing her

glasses in a little bar; an idle dog was trying to balance himself on the stump of his tail, and continually falling in the attempt; and, squatting on a couple of joint-stools, two boors were playing a rude kind of back-gammon, smoking short pipes with metal tops, and swilling beer. Presently these gentry fell out over their cups, and one proposed to "cave" the other's head in with a flagon; the old woman at the spinning-wheel woke up; the hostess began to shriek over her glasses; the idle dog barked furiously; a girl who was making cheese in the next room popped a gilt-scalped head through the half-opened door; and the landlord, who had such long legs and such wide shoulders, and such a great unkempt stooping head that he looked like a cow in disguise, came in from the backyard and began to say awful things in low Dutch. All this was delicious to witness; for, abating the billiard-table—and that, as I have said, was covered up—the whole scene became transformed at once into a "conversation" by Adrian Van Ostade.

Peace being restored, Bolander took us for a walk through the clean village of Brock. Visitors are warned by a notice-board in the outskirts not to walk through it without a stopper to their pipes; but I was much surprised to find that no spittoons were provided at the street corners, and that there were no little metal boxes, such as you see in the German railway carriages, to receive the ashes of cigars. *En revanche,* ere I had walked fifty paces, I saw several highly-respectable

muck-heaps and considerable quantities of unmistakable mud. The village, which is about as large as Thames Ditton, is intersected by those baby canals of which the Dutch are so fond; the water, as usual, stagnant and foul, and crossed by rickety wooden bridges, the planks in many instances absolutely rotten. The streets—or rather lanes—are all paved, flush from one side to the other, with the hard, narrow, Dutch bricks called "clinkers." Some of the houses have petrified and vitreous parterres before them, made of shells and bits of stone and glass stuck in mortar, and arranged in fantastic patterns. The houses are mainly of wood, painted white, with green shutters and shingle roofs. There is a pretty cemetery, but evidently laid out for show; and I should tremble to be locked in there at the witching time of night, for fear of the ghosts leaping out of their graves and dunning one for guilders. In some of the gardens there must be in the summer time a pretty show of dahlias and tulips; but there is not in the whole place such a thing as a tall old tree or a cottage covered with ivy.

There is a handsome orphan asylum, an institution which, to the undying honour of the Dutch people, no hamlet, to the meanest, is without; and there is a gloomy old brick church, which was shut up, of course, and which, not containing the tombs of any admirals, no sexton, with a bunch of keys, was in attendance to exhibit. The pastor has, as of right, the handsomest house in Brock; the schoolhouse is a substantial edifice,

but I am not quite certain whether a squad of ragged and dirty boys who were squabbling and playing pitch and toss under the church walls, and who would have derived much benefit from a visit from that strong-armed beadle you see in "Industry and Idleness," were orphans, or schoolboys, or both. It is likewise extremely unpleasant to mark the ceremonious and sanctimonious bow or curtsey offered to every stranger in the village by every child he meets. It is not the frank or the timid salutation of an English village child. It is accompanied by an outstretched palm, and a hard, impudent, staring leer, and means, clearly enough, *backsheesh*. I think that next to a village where there is an ancient endowed charity for founders' kin, I would back a show-place for the sure corruption and demoralization of the population, old and young.

They were making no butter, and but little cheese, in Brock just then. The resident gentry—underwriters, stockbrokers, retired tradesmen, and the like—only come to Brock in the summer, preferring to winter at the Hague. Bolander did not receive with any great favour a proposition that we should call on the clergyman or the schoolmaster. It was not customary, he said. But there was still something else to see. There was a place to be visited to which all the world went. We were accordingly inducted by the back door into a building which I declare I mistook at first for a second-hand curiosity shop in Wardour Street; the stock in

trade rubbed up with silver sand to look likely. A suite of three rooms and the usual bed cupboards were crammed with a heterogeneous assemblage of objects; brazen pots and pans innumerable; kettles and caldrons; plates and dishes, carved oak cabinets and presses, paltry plaster casts and sham bronze ornaments of the Lowther Arcade order, and some really good old china. But there was too much of everything: and everything was there evidently for show. We were now presented to the woman with a face like a horse, and with the strident exordium of "Mozzoo, Mataame," she led us through the house, expatiating on the whiteness of the floor and the brightness of the kettles and saucepans, until I was as sick of one as of the other. She showed us the famous ledger with its visiting cards from all parts of the world; she showed us her Sunday clothes, her "ribbons, chains, and ouches;" her presses full of linen, and her Brussels lace bed-furniture; but she always kept a hawk eye behind and before her, either to see that we did not steal anything, or to watch whether we did not feel inclined to buy anything. The old china, the lace and glass, were all for sale. In fact, the chief show-house in Brock was a *bric-à-brac* shop. Finally, she took us into a room and introduced us to "Mign Vader." Father was a venerable personage with a long beard, who, as I conjectured from a thin curl of smoke proceeding from one side of his jacket, had hastily pocketed his pipe on our entrance. The "old cuss," if he will permit me to speak of him by that affectionate

although familiar name, was shut up by a window in a very high-backed chair, and a large pair of horn-rimmed spectacles on his good old nose, was making believe to read out of a thundering old book printed in black letter, with double columns. I am sure it was a good book; but of this I am equally sure, that if "Mign Vader," his spectacles, and his book were not all part of the show, I, and not that patriarchal personage, must be a Dutchman.

The woman who acted as a cicerone seemed very much disappointed when, on going away, I only presented her with a guilder, and did not purchase any old china. She shouted after us that the china was superb, and of the sixteenth century; but I declined to listen to the voice of the charmer. We went back to the shabby inn, where we had some bread and cheese and execrable beer, for which the host, who resembled a cow in disguise, made us pay four shillings English. "They charge in winter," whispered Bolander, "what they call de high price." I presume they did so for the sake of antithesis; for nothing could have been lower than the inn itself.

In conclusion, I have to observe that, although Brock is a queer, quaint place enough, there is scarcely a village in Holland that does not offer the same characteristics, which you may study at your leisure, without being set upon by a flock of harpies. As to its cleanliness, it has been impudently and systematically exaggerated. I grant all the scrubbing, and polishing,

and holystoning, and beeswaxing; but in a score of instances I saw signs of untidiness and shiftlessness, and I will back dozens of English villages, and hundreds of English labourers' cottages, to be five thousand times cleaner than the cleanest house in the "Clean village of Brock."

NORTHERN GERMANY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM AMSTERDAM TO HAMBURG.

I. BY RAIL TO COLOGNE—THE EXAMINATION OF BAGGAGE NUISANCE.

AS the crow flies, I am perfectly well aware that it is less than a day's journey from the first to the last of the places named at the head of this chapter; but to come from the capital of Holland to the free and Imperial city of the Elbe took me, taxing, moreover, the powers of the German *Schnellzug* to the utmost, from the tenth to the nineteenth of December.

Mind, I do not consider myself in any way bound by the proceedings of the crow; nor am I at all ambitious of imitating that disreputable bird. I grant that, when he chooses, he can attain a tolerable mathematical straightness of direction on the wing; but how often, if you please, does a crow condescend to bear in mind the axiom, *Linea recta brevissima est?* I find him, the rather, consorting in out-of-the-way belfries with other crows; sitting in corn fields about sunset, and wagging his wicked head as he and his mates talk scandal—no doubt about the most respectable persons, including

her late Majesty, that "bright occidental star, Queen Elizabeth;" hopping into folds to steal the wool off sheeps' backs, and sneaking into dairies to purloin lumps of cheese, out of which, I am glad to say, he is afterwards cozened by the fox. As the crow flies! just watch him flying where there is a murderers' gibbet, or, better still, a battle-field. What becomes of his straight ways then? He wheels and wheels, and hovers, and darts, and picks the juicy bone, and riots on the carcases of man and horse, and laughs at the distinction men have given him in connexion with the map. One becomes weary at last of being told to fly like the crow, to consider the ways of the ant, and remember that the tortoise, not the hare, won the race. I wish some one would give us a new edition of Æsop's Fables, with, not the lower animals, but men, as exemplars.

So I came from Amsterdam, not as the crow flies, but as my *feuille de route* laid it down that I should travel, and in accordance with the arrangements made in the winter time-tables of the railway companies of Holland and North Germany. They do not "fash" themselves much, those railway companies. *Chi va piano va sano* is their motto, and *pianissimo* their amendment of the proverb. A train in the morning and a train in the evening, with perhaps, on grand occasions, a train at mid-day. What more could a reasonable wayfarer desire? Twenty miles an hour, and plenty of stoppages for eating and drinking; no feverish rushing and tearing through the country; no scalding your

mouth with hot soup and bad tea. The guard never fails to open the door and apprize you that you may alight and take something at your ease. "*Hier bleiben wir fünf und zwanzig minuten,*" he murmurs with a sigh of satisfaction. Honest man; he too hungers for his *butterbrod,* and his mug of Brunswick beer and his pipe. The Germans regard the refreshment-room as a solid, serious element in railway economy. "Restauration" is with them no light and frivolous word. The engine takes in wood and water; why should not the traveller take in provender?

I own that this attention to creature comforts is, in some parts of the Continent, carried somewhat to excess. There is a station somewhere in Belgium, Verviers or Erquellines, I forget which, where, coming from Paris, you arrive in the middle of the night. Your luggage has already been examined at the frontier; there is not the slightest necessity for stopping; but under the hollow pretext that you may have something contraband in your dressing bags or your railway wrappers, *tout le monde descend.* You are forced to alight, marched through the simulacrum of a Custom House, where a sleepy *douanier* asks you if you have anything to declare —a mere sham and make-believe as perfunctory as the celebrated queries *in re* "the widow" put to a student who is called to the bar—and then in Indian file you regain, by another door, your platform. *But you must pass through a capital refreshment-room ere you reach this door.* How nice the *potage* smells! what delicate shanks

those hot cutlets have! how amiably the Royal Family of Belgium, whose portraits decorate the walls of the *salle à manger*, look down on you as though to invite you to partake of a nutritious and not expensive supper. I have known crusty travellers declare the whole thing an infamous imposition and "plant;" plump down their strapped-up rugs on the table, and declare that there they would wait, without taking a sou's worth of refreshment, until the bell rang. As a rule, these are persons of scant experience. Old roadsters eat and drink whenever and wherever they can. How can you tell when or where you may eat and drink again? And even the crusty people very often relent. Ten minutes at dead of night is too long to be locked up in a cook-shop with your muzzle off. They fall to, and find the *potage* capital, and the slender-shanked cutlets delicious. Believe me, more wholesome advice was never given than that proffered by John Dryden in "Alexander's Feast." Take the goods with which the gods provide you. To-morrow lovely Thais may no more sit by your side, and you may get no better fare at three in the morning than cold cabbage and seltzer water.

There was much more to be seen in Amsterdam; but a voice like that of the chieftain in "Lord Ullin's Daughter" cried, "Boatman, do not tarry." I am afraid I have not told you half enough about the spiked booms which bar the entrance to the Ij; about the New Exchange on the Dam, and the enormous stock-jobbing transactions daily concluded there; about

the tomb of Admiral de Ruyter in the Nieuwe Kirk, and the pompous epitaph, "*Immensi tumor oceani.*" But I am sure you don't want to be told about the great organ in the Oude Kirk, with its sixty-eight stops, three rows of manuals—but no more. I confess that I should have very much liked to see the *sleepkoets*, or Dutch hackney carriage, which is said to consist of the body of a coach mounted on a sledge, drawn by one horse, while the driver, walking by the side of the animal, holds in one hand a bit of cloth, or rag, dipped in oil, and fastened to the end of a string, which he contrives to drop at intervals under the runners of the sledge to diminish the friction. I asked the waiter for a *sleepkoets*, but he laughed, and said I could take the omnibus, or a *vigilante*. I had no letter of recommendation to the burgomasters or magistrates, and no time to spare, else I should have liked to visit the old Rasp-house and the Spin-house, and the Almonosier's Orphan-house. Nor even did I inspect one of those famous diamond-mills—the mills worked by steam, and where the wheels that cut the precious stones into facets are said to revolve two thousand times in a minute. You remember that when the Kohinoor had to be converted into a genteel diamond from the coarse shapeless splendid lump it was when it arrived from Lahore, Hebrew lapidaries from Amsterdam were specially sent for to lick the glaring monster into shape.

I left Holland very disappointed at not having seen any storks. It was the wrong time of the year again,

I suppose. They told me that there were storks kept at the public expense in the Fish-market at the Hague; but not a long-legged bird could I catch sight of. At Amsterdam they were likewise conspicuous by their absence. I made one pilgrimage ere I left Holland—a pilgrimage which was to me both a pleasure and a duty. I went to draw a little cash, and I went to the counting-house of one of the most famous bankers in the world to draw it. I like these pilgrimages in large cities, and to find myself gazing with a kind of awe-struck reverence at the mansion of the financial potentate who could buy me up from my hat to my boots, and make a present of what I fetched to the lad that swept his office. I never pass Lombard-street without a certain tremor, and near New-court, St. Swithin's-lane, I always take off my hat. At Frankfort I go to look at Rothschild's. In Paris I behold him too, bestriding four houses at once, as the courier of St. Petersburg was wont to do horses, all crammed from cellar to basement with Napoleons and five-franc pieces. Who has the grandest, severest house on the English Quay at Petersburg? It is Stieglitz. The time may come when I shall bow down even before the palazzo of a Torlonia, or abase myself in the outward rooms of a Soria. It is only in New York that you can call on a banker without being afraid of him. In fact, you walk as boldly into a Wall-street bank as into a bar. You will be received in the very parlour, and by the very partners themselves, to confer about an affair

of seven dollars fifty cents, and ten to one, after you have transacted your little business with Messrs. Duncan and Sherman, or Brown Brothers, the mightiest of financiers will invite you to come over to Delmonico's, at the corner of William-street, and partake of fried oysters and stimulants.

Blessings on the head of the man who invented circular notes! With the aid of those convenient little documents the humble middle-class traveller is on a temporary equality with the nobleman or the millionaire who is making the Grand Tour. I might have lived till eighty, for instance, before I could dream of obtaining a letter of credit on the tremendous house of Hope and Co., of Amsterdam; but the letter which accompanies a bundle of circular notes is at the command of anybody who takes a few pounds to a joint-stock bank in London. It does not bind the banker to ask you to dinner, to introduce you to his family, to show you the lions of the place. It merely warrants him in letting you have as much money as you have notes for. Moreover, the foreign agents who cash circular notes are always bankers of the highest class, whereas I have known more than one friend go abroad with a flourishing letter of credit, and find three out of the ten bankers to whom it was addressed broken.

With a kind of grave rapture, then, I ascended the somewhat rickety flight of stairs from a side door of a huge pile of buildings in the Kaisergracht, occupied by

the offices of Hope and Co. How devoid of ostentation these foreign bankers are! From the first view of Crœsus's counting-room you would think he was not worth twopence. No mahogany counters, no ground-glass screens, no scarlet-bound ledgers, no mysterious gas burning in high-up galleries, where more clerks are poring over more old ledgers—no policeman in neat green chair surveying the customers with Argus eyes—no massive-plated inkstands, no copper shovels, no tills bursting with gold and silver. I found myself in a huge blank room, not unlike the fifth floor in a Manchester factory, only the looms were desks, and the silent clerks there were spinning figures instead of cotton. There was a little rabbit-hutch, through whose orifice you conferred with the clerk who did your business. A great leathern pad, a rickety three-legged stool, a strip of counter covered with ten thousand splashes of ink, and a scrap of paper wafered up and telling you that bills for acceptance might be dropped into that slit in the deal partition, and this was all. Where were the pomp and pride and circumstance of the mighty Adrian Van Hoep? of the great firm which might fill all the vaults beneath the Het Palais with their spare guilders? I looked in vain for the faintest reflex of the splendours of the Deepdene of the Palace in Piccadilly, of the Hyde-park Gates, of the Essay on ancient costume. I did not even see a copy of "Anastasius," or of the *Saturday Review* lying about.

When my modest prayer had been heard, and my little draft converted into guilders and cents, I was turning to go, when, in the dim obscurity of that Dutch counting-house, I descried its solitary ornament —a huge, full-length portrait of a gentleman in military uniform and spiky moustaches. Yes, there he was, like the Colossus of Rhodes in jack-boots and buskins, with the broadest of chests, and the silver eagle flapping its wings and craning its double neck on his crest; there he was—Nicolai-Paulovitch, Czar of all the Russias. All at once I began to smell gunpowder. The room turned red. The stove became an arsenal. Sabres and bayonets bristled where pens and rulers were before; and legions of loan-mongers rushed forth, crying, "*Bella, horrida bella,*" and vehemently quoting *Les obligations Russes.* See the advantage of circular notes! If you had a letter of credit, and your banker asked you to dinner, your tongue would be tied, and you would not dare to say a word about his counting-house or his pictures. But a budget of circular notes permits you, albeit you are no maiden, to walk in meditation, fancy free. So farewell, Amsterdam, city of canals and scrubbing-brushes and red-herrings, which you are allowed perpetually to smell, but never to eat. Why wont they let you have red-herrings in Holland? How would it be at Greenwich if they refused to serve you with whitebait? or at Richmond if they denied you maids of honour?

From Amsterdam to Utrecht nothing worthy of

record took place. The railway is slow, but comfortable; and the guards and porters softly slide, as in a dissolving view, from the Dutch into the German speech, habit, and manner. You leave Holland under a vague impression that, after a residence of six weeks in the country, you would speak Dutch with fluency, and that at the end of six months' sojourn you would become a "Dutchman." Many of their words, like many of their customs, have, indeed, a surprising similarity to ours. Surely, you think, it cannot be so very hard to learn a language in which oysters are "*oester*," hot-water plate a "*warmstoff*," leeches "*bloedzwuigers*," the house-bell a "*huis-bel*," shipsmith a "*sheepsmid*," a steamer a "*stoomboot*," and a marine engineer a "*blok en pomp maker*." So, too, our kinship cannot be very remote to a people who delight in soap and water, who are for ever sweeping and scrubbing, who drink gin and eat skittleball-cheeses, who cure herrings, use warming-pans, and defy the Pope of Rome and all his works. Alas! the points of contact both in speech and manners are but few; and there are thousands of leagues of differences from one to the other. Between the Hollander and the Briton there is as much actual divergence as between a trout and a salmon.

There is some consolation to the eye on approaching Utrecht. The country begins to lose its distressing and sometimes intolerable platitude, and the appearance of the desolation of dampness decreases as the canals

grow rarer. Absolutely there are slight undulations, and there are other trees besides willows and alders. Huzza! here is a clump of firs; and those slender-sprayed saplings must in summer wear the livery of birch and larch. Positively, that is a river, with a perceptible current. But the shadows of a wintry afternoon soon shut in the suddenly-revealed landscape, and we roll away from Utrecht, where velvet for chairs and sofas—how it used to set your teeth on edge to pass a finger over that stiff-piled product of the Ultratrajectan looms—is made no longer, and to which the famous Peace, by Lord Stanhope commended, seems to have imparted a calm and sluggish tranquillity—happy, and slightly hum-drum.

At Emmerich the Prussian frontier is crossed, and your baggage is examined. The Prussian officials have a bad name all over Europe for a certain military haughtiness and dogmatic austerity of manner; but I am bound to say, so far as the custom-house arrangements at Emmerich go, they do not merit it. They scarcely looked at our boxes; and, after undoing a strap or two, and doing it up again, we went on our way rejoicing. They are very splendid officials as to uniform, and evidently "think no weak tea" of themselves; but, abating the *morgue militaire*, are very decent fellows to have anything to do with. So at least I have found them all along the Rhine, and in Prussia Proper. Don't be led away by stupid stories of their looking with a peculiar eye on Englishmen

because they *are* Englishmen. They are not to be bribed, and they think a good deal of themselves—as incorruptible people are apt to do. Now, the Briton is much given to corrupting every foreign nation with whom he comes in contact by feeing everybody right and left; and the man he fees he naturally despises and wipes his feet upon. As there is little bribery so is there less servility among Prussian *employés;* and the Briton is not unfrequently liable to mistake a cool and taciturn performance of duty for intentional rudeness. If a subordinate should be insolent to you, all you have to do is to complain to his superior officer, and the man will be punished; only I don't think much harm would accrue if, in addressing the officer, *you touched your hat.* You would find him quite ready to cap to you in return. I need only hint that Germans sometimes understand English, and that such salutations as "I say, come here," or "Hi! you with the helmet," or such asides as "What does this d—d fellow say?" are not precisely calculated to put foreigners in a good temper with us.

But after all, rude or civil, stringent or lax, what an absurd antediluvian, muddle-headed system is this examination of passengers' luggage! What is there worth smuggling that can be put into the compass of two portmanteaus and a hat-box? Who wishes surreptitiously to introduce the threehalfpenny cigars of one State to the prejudice of the penny-three-farthing cigars of another? What traveller in his senses would carry on a contraband trade on his own account in.

Dutch gin, as against German potato brandy? "Have you anything to declare?" the *douanier* asks, with a yawn. He knows you have nothing, fiscally speaking; but it is always at the tip of my tongue to say that I *have* something to declare, and that my declaration amounts to this, that the entire system is an anachronism, a nuisance, and a bore; a rotten and effete relic of the old network of robbery and extortion which, before the French Revolution, covered all Europe from the Pillars of Hercules to the Straits of Dover. Passports and custom-houses, Scheldt, Sound, and Elbe dues—they all meant the same thing, the fleecing and cozening of the traveller out of his money for the benefit of princes, petty or great. You shall see ruined castles and towers along the Rhine, about which they tell you all manner of lying legends: stories of bishops eaten up by rats, and sirens who decoyed mariners to their destruction. These rats and sirens were only robber barons and knights who stuck up toll-gates and custom-houses at their castles and towers, and barred the channel with their halfpenny-hatches, and made thrifty merchants and traders pay cess as they passed. The city of Antwerp has a bloody hand in its scutcheon; and that refers to a human mediæval custom of the old Bishops of Antwerp, who had a toll-gate on a bridge across an arm of the Scheldt, and were empowered to cut off the right hands of those who refused to pay the impost. Gradually we have got rid of these worm-eaten pests. Russia excepted, there

is not a country in Europe where anybody but the pawnbroker troubles himself as to whether you have a passport or not; yet there lies open before me a passport, not ten years old, which had to be *visé* by the Commissary of Police at Calais before its bearer could take the mail train for Paris; and I can remember the time when to stay over three days in a Parisian town was to be subjected to endless annoyances in filling up official forms, paying visits to the police *Præsidium*, obtaining "permits of residence," cards, and the like. All this rubbish has been swept into the dusthole; and I trust that ere long the examination of passengers' luggage nuisance will go with it.

I hear a voice in negation from the other side of the Atlantic. "It cannot be," cries the collector of the port of New York. "It cannot be," cries Boston. "Why, sir, there are German women who make the Atlantic voyage out and home a dozen times a year for the express purpose of smuggling diamonds, the which they conceal in their false back hair. Why, sir, twenty thousand dollars' worth of Brussels lace might be sewn up in one crinoline skirt; and trunks with false bottoms are openly sold in Maiden-lane, New York, to be used in smuggling cigars from Cuba." All I can say in reply is, that no stringency of custom-house regulations has ever stopped smuggling; but wherever those regulations have been relaxed smuggling has diminished, and, as a trade, has ceased to pay. Precisely the same argument holds good with respect to the punishment

of death. We go on hanging for murder; and villains go on murdering; but I need only mention three minor crimes for which the death penalty has been abolished —namely, bank-note forgery, sheep-stealing, and horse-stealing—for every one to admit that in those cases decrease in severity has been attended by decrease in the commission of the crimes themselves.

Such were my reflections as very late at night the rattling of the train over a bridge, and the reflection of many lamps in a great black gulf, told us that we were crossing the Rhine and had come to Cologne.

CHAPTER II.

FROM AMSTERDAM TO HAMBURG—*continued.*

II. COLOGNE IN WINTER — THE SHRINE OF THE THREE KINGS AND THE ELEVEN THOUSAND VIRGINS—POLITICAL GOSSIP.

WHEN Mr. Dombey, sen., returned from his wedding trip on the Continent, he informed Major Bagstock that he had found Paris cold—and dull. I ventured to find Cologne not only cold and dull, but as empty as Westminster Hall during the Long Vacation. You know that filthy and shameful by-lane at Cologne, the Thursemarkt, full of gloomy old hotels, from whose windows the next morning you are agreeably surprised in summer to find yourself looking out on the smiling, cheerful quay and the broad, blue, rushing Rhine. Well, those enormous barracks on the Thursemarkt were all empty. There used to be a house in Gracechurch-street which gave you the horrors from its ghastly loneliness of aspect. It was the South Sea House. The Grand Hotel Royal, the Hotel de Hollande, the Hotel du Nord, were all South Sea Houses.

The vast saloons, where the *tables d'hôte* are held in summer, were locked up, and your meals were served in dingy side rooms. There was little to eat; and that little you had an uneasy sensation had been snatched by a *hausknecht* in hot haste from the counter of a butcher round the corner. Even the wines and spirits had "g'en out." There was no English pale ale. There was no chartreuse; no absinthe even. What had become of the Geisenheimer Kothenburg; or the Johannisburger, with Prince Metternich's own signet attached to each flask? You must wait till next summer for these things. And could that swollen muddy stream be the RHINE; that peaked and pining little suburb opposite the pretty *villeggiatura* of Deutz; that dingy little steamer, like a tug in difficulties, heaped from bow to stern with a cargo of crockeryware, wooden shoes, and jars of turpentine, be the trim and and coquettish "Lorelei"—the delightful Rhineboat in which you had made so many pleasant pilgrimages from Cöln to Mainz-Castel? What had become of the awning and the brass-band, and the merry rascals who sold grapes and cakes and panoramas of the Rhine? What is the man doing, I wonder, who lives in a hole in the rock, and wakens up the fifteen echoes of the Lorelei with bugle and pistol? Is he sitting with his nose tallowed and a Welsh wig, wrapped in a bearskin, and waiting for tourists who never come; or has he gone into winter quarters with the burgomaster of Oberwesel?

My spirits sank far, far below zero when I thus con-

fronted Cologne. It was so exceedingly dismal. For how many times had I been to Cologne and found it such an exceedingly jolly place to spend six hours in! It is the ivory gate to the *Feenwelt*. 'Tis there you freight the bark that is to bear you over the Sâle Lake. Trim the helm, O Youth; and keep a lazy look-out at the prow, O Pleasure! There! the sails of purple silk are inflated by little puff-cheeked Cupids; and, the Naiads and the Sirens plashing round the bows, you set out. No need to lash yourself to the mast, or stop your ears with wax, as did the heathen man of old. You want to listen to the song, perilous though it be. Strike up, ye catgut-scrapers, and *vogue la galère*—whither away? To Coblentz, to Biberich, to Andernach, to Frankfort, to Wiesbaden, to Hombourg, to back the red, to drink the yellow Rhine wine, to waltz and flirt and ride on donkeys; to believe all the lying legends of the castles and palaces; to come home a little lean in purse, but with the mellow bronze of health upon you, and tell all your friends what a jolly time you have had, and exhibit the china pipe which cost you one florin ten kreutzers in the Zeil, as triumphantly as though it were a tomahawk won in a deadly fight with the Blackfoot Indians. Here have Smith of Oxford and Jones of Cambridge been at Cologne at the right time of the year and in the right frame of mind; and they have scrawled their frank, careless signatures on a window-sill at the Grand Hotel Royal. They did not quarrel

with their bread and butter, or compute how much per cent. the manciple made out of their cheeseparings here, I guess. They paid through the nose, like generous young Britons, never grumbling; for were they not going up the Rhine on the morrow, and were not the Miss Thompsons, with military heels to their boots and the plumes of cock-pheasants in their hats, to be their fellow-travellers per "Lorelei?"

They told me I should have gone up town to a new inn established on the Grand Hotel system, the Hotel du Nord. I sought it out, and found it a big, handsome house; but, peeping into the *salle-à-manger*, I found it as empty as the Palace of Versailles on a wet day. The *portier* had a crumbling and mildewed look; the waiters flapped their crumpled napkins listlessly, and had seemingly made up their minds to wash neither their linen nor themselves until next summer. I went in a *Wechsel-bank* to change some Napoleons into Prussian thalers, and the lady of the bank was snoozing behind the wire-fence like the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood. She was fat and past forty and not fair, and I did not strive to awaken her in the manner pursued by the Prince in the fairy tale. Besides, was there not that wire-grating? Everybody seemed asleep. I should not have been surprised to find the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa snoring in a beer-cellar with his beard grown through the table.

Being compelled to wait in this somnolent town for letters I went resolutely and doggedly to work to do,

for the tenth time, the sights of Cologne. I hunted up the Red Bedel in the transept of the Dom, and made him exhibit the Shrine of the Three Kings. Travellers have objected ere now that the sight of the three brown and grinning skulls, labelled Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar—which may be, for aught we know, the skulls of three malefactors satisfactorily hanged some time during the middle ages—is not worth the dollar charged for exhibiting them. Mr. P. T. Barnum, you will remember, rebuffed in an offer to purchase the entire concern, threatened to have a Three Kings Shrine made on his own account, and so to "bust up" the show at the Cathedral. But I confess that I like the great gilt chest, and do not think it dear at a dollar. The prodigious lie which the sacristan rolls as a sweet morsel under his tongue, when he tells you the shrine is worth a million sterling, knowing full well that all the precious stones disappeared at the Revolution, and have been replaced by bits of coloured glass—this alone is worth two dollars fifty. And who can grumble over the other thaler you pay at the church of St. Ursula to see the bones of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, and the skull and tooth of the saint herself, and the thighbone of St. Anybody—the Eleven Thousand Virgins being in all probability the bones of some mob of poor devils who died of the plague or were massacred in some wolfish combat between one German barbarian prince and another. There was a time when the world was governed by these colossal lies and figments, and when

high as well as low believed, or professed to believe, in Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, and St. Ursula and her eleven thousand Cornish *compagnons de voyage*. Surely it says something for the progress of civilization when the only use they serve now is to be made a peep-show of at a dollar a head.

Continual contemplation, however, of skulls and thigh-bones, although set in tinsel and pinchbeck, is apt to make one gloomy. Fortunately, there is a very pretty, snug theatre at Cologne, and they were giving that charming opera of the Chevalier von Flotow, *Martha*—the opera which is throughout so lively and so sparkling, and withal so soft and tender, that I often wonder that the audience don't get up before the first act is over, put their arms round each other's waists, and fall to a-waltzing. The prima donna sang out of tune, and squinted; and the tenor was fat, middle-aged, and murdered the "Last Rose of Summer" abominably; but the orchestra was magnificent, and the choruses were sung with the precision of a musical box. And who could grow tired of an opera which was over by nine P.M.?

Cologne used to have some claim to be considered the Pump of Europe. I don't mean anything disrespectful—as to insinuate, for instance, that the Colognese are pumps in the intellectual sense of the word, still less anything mechanical; for pumping and draining are not to be found in the philosophy of this very fair, but foul-smelling city. Whatever makes it

smell so nasty—the imperfectly buried bones of St. Ursula's virgins, or the dregs of the Eau de Cologne works? It is known that the sweetest essences are often distilled from the vilest refuse, and this may be the case with Jean Marie Farina's matchless perfume. But when I likened Cologne to a pump, I meant a general gathering and gossiping place—a *borne fontaine*, in fact, where the town-maidens rest their pails and their pitchers, and the tongues of cronies wag, and everybody talks *scan. mag.* as hard as ever he or she can. How Gretchen, who has been so ill-used by the Gnädiger Herr Faust, now eats and drinks for two; how the King of the Abares has written an insulting letter to the King of the Bulgares; how the Great Turk has made it up with the Republic of Barataria; how the Emperor Prester John is backward with his rent, and has got the brokers in. The *Kölnische Zeitung* is, in short, a printed pump. In this widely-circulated sheet the conventional entity known as "*Mann*" writes from everywhere about everything; and at the Pierian spring of Cologne *on dits* the well-informed correspondents of the *Indépendance Belge*, the *Europe* of Frankfort, and the *Mémorial Diplomatique* drink those deep draughts which are afterwards filtered through every pipe of European publicity.

Herein, I think, lies the great difference between the press of England and that of the continent. The English papers, entirely free, are full of local facts, law and police reports, accounts of meetings and the like,

with bold and authoritative comments thereupon, all of surpassing interest to English readers, but to foreigners wearisome and well-nigh incomprehensible. This is why English papers are so little read abroad; and even the travelling Englishman comes at last to take but a listless kind of interest in the full eight-paged paper from England. What, for example, does a wanderer a thousand miles from home care about Lord Stanley at Liverpool, or Mr. Bright at Rochdale? On the other hand, the continental press, in some countries utterly pinioned and gagged, in all more or less hampered and shackled, and bullied by authority, is compelled to have recourse for the major part of its daily pabulum to the dissemination of rumours more or less absurd, and stories more or less about a cock and a bull. The next day the rumours are contradicted, and perhaps the paper is prosecuted for the propagation of false news. Then the leek has to be eaten, and the blunder corrected. That fills another number; and on the morrow another course of rumours is served up.

One pities these poor journals often for the evident quandary in which they find themselves to know what to talk about, without offending this potentate in a helmet, or that despot in a cocked hat; and I have often thought they would do well to imitate those provincial American papers which, in the intervals of a European mail coming due, or when things at home are dull, boldly pad out their vacuous columns with a couple of chapters from Macaulay's "History," or half-a-dozen

pages from the "Idylls of the King." Fancy the *Opinion Nationale* making a *premier Paris* of the first canto of "La Pucelle," or the *Gazette d'Augsbourg* favouring its readers with a few excerpts from Schiller's "Thirty Years' War" by way of a leader! The proceeding, perhaps, would not be more ridiculous than the things one reads in foreign papers. It is unnecessary to trot out, for the ten thousandth time, Chancellor Oxenstiern's truism concerning the government of the world, but the attention of our sons may be directed, *pari passu*, to the infinitesimal amount of truth considered necessary in the conduct of certain foreign journals. Just take shorthand notes of what is said at the pump, and that is held perfectly sufficient.

The worst of it was, that when I reached Cologne the very pump was frozen, and the gossips had gone elsewhere. I sought them out in their cafés and beer-cellars, but their stock of scandal was the most meagre. They complain of a want of straw; how, then, should they make bricks? The wise and just old King of the Belgians, Leopold, was dead, there could be no doubt about that, for there was the *Indépendance*, with a black border, and any number of official documents bearing on the event. This sufficed for several sheets full of speculation and rumour, generally of the most ominous order: among them that astounding *non sequitur* in a Russian journal which, regarding the serious "complications" likely to arise from the demise of the Sovereign of Belgium, thought it behoved the Emperor

Alexander to "consolidate" his power in his outlying territories, by prohibiting to any persons not professing the orthodox religion the purchase of real estate in the kingdom of Poland. This roundabout way of telling the public that something disagreeable is going to be done to the Poles reminds one of the advertisement of M. Fattet, the dentist, who announced to his patrons that henceforth he should charge twenty-five francs in lieu of twenty for the extraction of a double tooth, "in consequence of the prolongation of the Rue de Rivoli."

The King of the Belgians being buried, and the latest political bubble burst, there was a lull. A little play was made about the alleged sale of an English girl in India, the satirical rogues of the foreign press remarking that it was strange that so much fuss should be made about one victim more being added to the zenana of a nabob, when it was notorious that such sales of female flesh and blood were of daily occurrence in *le Smitfield*. Had they substituted Belgravia or Tyburnia for "Smiffel," the satirists would not have been altogether wrong, perhaps. Then came, like a thunderclap, the intelligence that the English and French ambassadors at Berlin had on the occasion of some wedding left the palace in dudgeon because they were not invited to dine at the royal table; the Prince of Putbus, it appears, who is *Truchsess* or high-steward to the house of Hohenzollern, having declined to hand a plate of soup to any one not of princely rank; while the other grandee, who officiated as *Mundschenk*, or

chief butler, indignantly refused to whisper "Champagne or 'ock, sir?" in any but royal ears. The silly custom which converts noblemen of high rank into waiters and flunkeys would seem to be copied from the old ceremonies observed at the coronation of the Emperors of Germany at Frankfort, when Electors of the Empire were arch-stewards and arch-cupbearers. The good old custom, however, of distributing coin to the population from a silver measure, and allowing the tagrag and bobtail to cut off and appropriate the scarlet cloth on which the Kaiser walked to the cathedral, has fallen into desuetude. This is generally the case with customs by which anything is to be given. Court chamberlains and heralds only insist on the retention of those by which anything is to be got. Perish *largesse*, but fie upon him who would tax the table of fees for making a Knight of the Bath! Nor need we laugh too merrily over the absurdity of the Prince of Putbus plying the ladle like Mr. Cann of the leg-of-beef soup-shop, or the other *Fürst* filling the wine-glasses. At the coronation of our own Sovereigns a court of claims apportions offices quite as absurd; and I don't see much to choose between the *Truchsess* and the *Schenk*, and the English duke who brings in the first dish at the coronation banquet, and his brother who hands the finger-glasses and has the tablecloth for his fee, and the proud noble who is allowed to enter the royal presence with his hat on, and the other haughty patrician who claims to be allowed to come to court without

any pantaloons. Before you empty all your vials of sarcasm on the foreigners, I should advise you to read an old English law book about "Jocular Turnes."

Meanwhile Cologne has, besides rumour, a few plain facts to grumble about. Any one who has been acquainted with this city, say for ten or fifteen years, will remark the satisfactory filling out of the once desolate streets which has taken place during that period. Cologne was once, next to Trèves, the most convent and church-ridden town in Germany. The priests used to boast that she could show as many steeples as there were days in the year. The French cleared out all this clerical rookery; sacked the monasteries, gutted the shrines, and turned the monks and nuns adrift. Of the two hundred religious establishments which she possessed at the end of the last century, Cologne now only retains twenty-nine. The result was, for a great many years, a dreadful vacuum. Twenty-five hundred ecclesiastics had been subtracted from the population; acres of convent gardens and cloisters lay bare; churches had been converted into warehouses and nunneries into stables. The scanty population had as much elbow room as the Antwerpers. But within the last few years trade has revived prodigiously. Cologne has become a great railway and commercial centre, and is once more a busy and prosperous town. Houses congregate, thick as peas, on all the vacant spaces. House-rent has risen enormously. The poor are crying out that they cannot get shelter; but Cologne cannot grow, cannot expand;

she is congested and garotted, and bound in iron swaddling bands by a terrific girdle of fortifications. So many millions of thalers have been spent on earth-works, casemates, gates, and ditches, that it would, of course, be preposterous to suggest the demolition of ramparts and bastions which are about as useful as the walls of Jericho; but a city, the pride and glory of the Rhenish provinces, is crippled and stifled by these nuisances of military engineering. Inland fortification is no doubt a very fine thing. I never heard that it did anything beyond protracting a war and the consequent bloodshed and misery accruing therefrom; but, in justice to honest and peaceable people, who don't want to fight, but only to work hard and make money, would it not be expedient in future only to fortify such places as are not inhabited by non-combatants? Cronstadt is a brilliant example of this. You might blaze away at it for months without hurting anybody but the garrison, and *they* live in bomb-proof casemates; but why not follow out the example, and fortify, say the Blocksburg, or Mont Blanc, or the Peak of Teneriffe?

CHAPTER III.

FROM AMSTERDAM TO HAMBURG—*continued.*

III. FRANKFORT—THE HÔTEL DE RUSSIE AND "DÎNERS À LA RUSSE"—CASSEL—HESSIAN TROOPS ON SALE—HANOVER AND HARBURG.

DELIBERATELY to take the rail in preference to the Rhine for the purpose of proceeding from Cologne to Mayence would be, in summer time and fair weather, a proceeding as indefensibly tasteless as to choose a cellular van as a conveyance for crossing the Brenner Pass in the Tyrol; to put on green spectacles when you make the ascent to see the sun rise over the Vale of Clwyd; to leave Paris on the eve of Mardi Gras; to pass the Derby Day reading "Cook's Voyages," in the back parlour of the Spread Eagle, at Epsom; or, shut yourself up in your state room just as your steamer has rounded that bight in the Hudson River, and was beginning to bask in all the enchanting loveliness of the Catskills and the mountains of West Point. I know people who do this sort of thing, and are rather proud of it than otherwise; who boast that they left Granada without seeing the Alhambra because their corns were troublesome; that they wouldn't enter a gondola at Venice for fear of draughts and the toothache; that

they dined at Greenwich—not caring for fish—on mulligatawny soup and rumpsteak; and that they objected to the best room assigned to them in the hotel at Naples because the windows commanded a full view of Vesuvius. There are travellers who admire nothing, and who see nothing, and who really deserve the reproach of pococurantism so unjustly levelled at the great Napoleon when he sat down by the light of the blazing Kremlin to pen a green-room code defining the duties of the prompter and curtailing the attributes of the call-boy in the Théâtre Français.

But circumstances alter cases. Wishing to look in at Frankfort before I made my way into North Germany, I chose the most expeditious, albeit most uninteresting, route for the attainment of my goal, and was whisked away to Mayence without "totting" off the Seven Mountains, without going into raptures about the historical associations of one particular castle, and subsequently discovering that I had been looking at the wrong one; without hearing any Lorelei echoes awakened, or eating any Rhine carp, or trying to find an elegant rhyme to "vineyard" in some new apostrophe to the grape-clad terraces of the glorious river.

When the Prussian armies, returning from the conquest of France after Waterloo, just came in sight of the historic stream of Fatherland, we are told, they fell on their knees by whole battalions, crying out, "The Rhine! The Rhine!" and weeping for joy. Mrs. Abdy has written a very pretty poem, which has been set to still prettier

music, on the occurrence. I quite believe in its truth, only the Prussian armies not being gifted with second sight, could not see a black old hulk called the Holy Alliance, with her tenders, the Retrogression and the Oppressor, moored right in the middle of the river. But in winter, you don't feel at all inclined to cry for joy at the aspect of the Rhine; you are the more given to sneezing; you are the more disposed to shiver, and to shut out the fog and mist that come creeping from the river into your carriage, and to look upon it altogether as unsentimentally as though it were the Thames at Blackwall on a wet day. The Rhine, like everything else, has its holiday time and its holiday dress. It is a show river; it is not to be seen without a fee to the sacristan; and in winter, without music, without *tables d'hôte*, without tourists, it becomes as shabby and undignified as Louis the Fourteenth without his wig and his shoes with the high heels, crying because he has been bullied by Père La Chaise, and Madame de Maintenon wont let him have any cognac in his *tisane*. The great king came down to *that*.

In lieu, therefore, of patronizing the Amalgamated Cologne and Dusseldorf Steamboat Company, I proceeded to the railway station and took my ticket for Coblentz, had a thorough warm at the stove, and filled a case-bottle before going up the Rhine. The foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine, and chiefless castles, breathing their farewells of "the majestic river," are best beheld at this season of the year from

the window of a "*Wagen für rauchen*;" the spectator being buttoned up in a pea-jacket, his neck enveloped in a woollen comforter, and his double soles carefully deposited on a tin hot-water case. You little thought that you would come to be thankful for a glass of "something comfortable" at Rolandseck, or to call for a fresh foot-warmer at Andernach.

We are poor, mean, selfish creatures any way. The pasty cheek of the dullest boor will glow a little when in a June afternoon you show him the Siebengebirge, or the Drachenfels; the fishiest blood will find its current quickened when the sun is setting over St. Goar; and even Podsnap will find something to admire in the lowering crag of Ehrenbreitstein; but we *must* have warmth, we must have sun, we must have company; and when you are alone, and have a cold in your head, and chilblains, the Seven Mountains grow as great a bore as Mr. Wordsworth's little maid who persisted in the assertion "we are seven." You are glad that the Drachenfels are passed; and without bestowing a single thought on Ehrenbreitstein, you think the train waits an unconscionable time at Coblentz. I was expatiating to a friend once on the beauty of the Paris boulevards with the toy booths all set out for the Festival of the New Year, when he asked, "Did you ever walk up and down from the Madeleine to the Rue Vivienne on New Year's Day in the hope of meeting somebody from whom you could borrow five francs?" I confess that the boulevards from that point of view

would have seemed as cheerless as the Rhine did to me this winter-time.

There is a very good "Restauration" at Mayence, but they lag fearfully on the road. We had left Cologne at three, and did not get into Frankfort until eleven o'clock at night. My spirits rose somewhat as I drove to the good old Hôtel de Russie, in the Zeil, one of the best—if not *the* best and most comfortable—hotels on the European continent. But the moral thermometer was destined to fall again. The Russischer Hof held its own; the wines and viands were as good, the waiters as civil and attentive, the bed-rooms as clean and comfortable, the Brothers Drexel as glad to see one as of yore. But somehow there was no ridding myself of the impression that this was the wrong time of the year to come to Frankfort, and that the Hôtel de Russie was, like its fellows, in a certain phase of the dormouse or shut-up condition. The sumptuous apartment where, during the season, the *table d'hôte* is served, and at which never less than three crowned heads at one time are always supposed to be present, was closed, and we partook of meals in the smoking-room, where the waiters made frantic efforts to disguise the odour of recent tobacco by burning pastilles on the mantelpiece. There was only one English member of Parliament staying in the house, and he was methodically reading up back numbers of the Berlin *Kladderadatsch*, in the hope, perchance, of lighting upon some sharp things to let off against the Ministry next session.

I fancy the Hôtel de Russie must be a Tory house, for they absolutely take in the *Morning Herald* there; although, from the fact of that respectable sheet's being enclosed in a cover inscribed *New York Herald*, it may be that its introduction to Frankfort is due only to a long-standing mistake on the part of a newsvendor which has never been corrected. I think I discerned one crowned head in the smoking-room, where a Lilliputian *table d'hôte* was still held at five o'clock. He was continually summoning a gigantic flunkey, with a cockade of all the colours of the rainbow in his hat, and whiskers and moustaches that would have done honour to a corporal in the Horse Guards Blue. An hour before dinner this servitor brought in the crowned head's own wine, three bottles of different shape—I hope he did not drink the contents of them all—and placed them by the seat which his highness had selected. As the Hôtel de Russie boasts a first-rate cellar, it is to be presumed that the Brothers Drexel charged the crowned head a decent sum for corkage. Who could this magnifico be? Perhaps the mighty Prince of Putbus himself.

There was no disguising the fact that the house was wofully cold and cheerless. To ascend that huge marble staircase with the porphyry banisters was like crossing Behring's Straits in your stocking feet. The entrance hall has a splendid frescoed ceiling, where nymphs, cupids, hamadryads, and the Electors of the holy Roman empire and other amphibean divinities—

for they are all either heads or tails—are disporting themselves in fleecy clouds. How very cold they looked! How much better off they would have been for the substitution of Witney blankets for those fleecy clouds! The *Hausknecht* did his best to stoke the stoves into a red heat; but he might as well have tried to warm the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates or to make a snuggery of Stonehenge on a wet day. Holland is damp, I own, but you can always fall back on the warming-pan. The cold of Germany is a dry cold that solidifies your very marrow; but they never will give you sufficient bed-clothes. It is true that they put a feather bed atop of you; but it is a mere cushion, a loose sack of plumes. You had best involve yourself in your virtue, or a railway rug, if you have one, and puff the feathery imposture away.

I am sorry also to record my conviction that the German stove does not perform the duties which it is ostensibly constructed to fulfil. The business of an archdeacon, according to the late Bishop Blomfield, is to discharge archidiaconal functions. The business of a stove is to warm a room and the inmates thereof. The German stove does neither. It is very handsome and monumental, and is often decorated with engaging bas-reliefs in stone china; but you can't warm yourself at a bas-relief. When it does burn it makes your head ache, leaving your extremities in icy coldness. It dispenses maleficent gases, and is always going out at the wrong time. I prefer the Dutch stove

—abominable though in some respects it may be—for, properly fed, it will grow red hot, and bake you into pie-crust. It is better than these whited sepulchres with their shining panels and brittle bas-reliefs.

At the Hôtel de Russie a very excellent custom obtains in connexion with the *table d'hôte*. The dinner is, as at all continental hotels, *à la Russe*, a vile misnomer, full of corruption, affectation, and inadequacy, for a *dîner à la Russe* is not in the least like a Russian dinner, that is to say, you see nothing on the table except artificial flowers and plated ware; and the little messes on which you regale are pushed under your nose by the waiters. For myself I abominate this way of feeding; a way intolerable alike to gods and men. Did they feed in this manner in Olympus? Did they sup after this fashion in Paul Veronese's picture in the Louvre? the most magnificent *tableau* of a banquet ever designed. Why am I to be stuck opposite all that glass and greenhouse stuff, as though I were a macaw in the Pantheon conservatory? Can I eat rhododendrons or ranunculus bulbs, or aid my digestion by swallowing tripods of naked little boys in white Dresden? Short work, I conjecture, would Brillat Savarin have made of the *dîner à la Russe*. Our business at a dinner-table is, I take it, to eat and drink; and we have an indefensible right to look upon our food, the contemplation of which leads, besides, to the narration of choice anecdotes about eating, and well chosen dicta concerning wines; the only conversation which should be tolerated before the cloth is drawn. I remember once, at a

dinner at Fishmongers' Hall, one of the most edifying conversations I ever listened to in my life. It bore upon a peculiarly delicious preparation of pig, which at civic banquets frequently accompanies roast turkey. "Now this," said a worthy alderman opposite me, laying a knife delicately and lovingly on the blushing pork, "is a chine; there are worse things than a chine." He went on to tell us about a chine he had known under the reign of the great Sir Claudius Stephen Hunter—a chine which had elicited praise from the lips of the Duke of York. Then the master of the worshipful company of Dogs' Collar Makers—their hall is under Bow Church—cut in with a story of a chine he had tasted some time when Manlius was consul, or Magnay was mayor. It was delightful.

The modern usages of society are, however, against me in this as in many other matters; and I take off my hat to society and submit. The good custom they have at the Hôtel de Russie is this: The house bows to society as I do; but the Brothers Drexel are determined to show their guests that the fare provided for them has not come out of tin-cans hermetically sealed. If there is a big salmon in the bill of fare, or a Rhine carp of meritorious dimensions, or a lordly haunch of venison, or a goose of glorious capacity, or a brace of handsome pheasants, the head-waiter brings in the dish itself; deposits it for a while on a large plated stand, to be greeted with the admiring gaze of the company, and then, their minds being seised of its good points,

bears it away to a side table to be dissected. The thing is put, so to speak, *en evidence*. The pieces necessary to conviction are laid on the table of the court. You know that you are not about to be fed with the scraps of yesterday's dinner. The proceeding is a judicious concession to the eternal truth that you must appeal to the stomach through the eye, and by that grand junction reach at last the heart.

It was at Frankfort that the signs of winter—real, acrid, nipping, pinching winter—first became visible in the outward aspect of society. I should say that in Holland nobody can be quite certain what month in the year it is. To a washerwoman all days are wet. A fish can scarcely feel the cold. But there was no mistake about the weather in Germany. The denizens of all the zoological gardens of Northern Europe seemed to have been let loose on the Zeil at Frankfort. Furs were the only wear. The "Pelz Magazin" was the shop most frequented. The rugged Russian bear rolled past you, followed by the great she-bear, his spouse, and a tribe of cubs sucking their little paws to keep themselves warm. Genuine sable, passing in a grand *calèche*, turned up his nose at imitation sable on the foot-pavement, just as pig iron is said to turn up its nose at tenpenny nails. The skunk, deodorized and combed and frizzed up into a handsome and expensive fur, held up its head, and took the wall, like a rogue who, having made his fortune, is suddenly recognized as a "most remarkable man" by society. The ermine gleamed

snowy and saucy, and had as many tales to tell as the Sultana Scheherâzade. The modest chinchilla hung, like an affectionate child, about the neck of beauty. The silver fox cunningly inserted himself as a boot lining round beauty's ankles. The squirrel, like a fool as he is, held beauty's hand without squeezing it. The Astracan lamb spread his meek fleece wherever they chose to lay him; and the humble rabbit and the harmless necessary cat passed—as people often do in society—for something quite different from that which they really were. Fur pelisses, fur mantles, fur capes, collars, caps, gloves, and boots met you at every step. The very cab-drivers were bales of hairy stuff, and the railway guards looked like Calibans.

There was a lull in politics while I abode in Frankfort, for the Frankfurters were all more or less busy in welcoming old Father Christmas. The German Christmas, with its toy-hung trees, its weird figures of magicians, dwarfs, and knights in armour, always strikes me as having more of Paganism than Christianity about it. It is a mystic, legendary Thor-and-Odin kind of Christmas, from which, somehow, you miss the Cross altogether; but I have no doubt the Germans are very jolly in their own homes about this time, and have as full an appreciation as we have of the meaning of this festival—which has been pitiably vulgarized and shoppified in England of late years by Christmas numbers of periodicals, Christmas concerts, leggy burlesques, and the like.

I went away from Frankfort—loth, as I am always, to quit that bustling, cheerful, friendly city, whose very shopkeepers win your heart while they charge you a florin for what is worth twenty kreutzers—and took the train to Cassel. It is a six hours' journey. We were like the fine lady of Banbury Cross who rode a white horse, in the ballad, for we had music wherever we went, from Frankfort to Cassel. In the next carriage was a large party of opera singers—I recognized on a "Saratoga trunk" the name of the distinguished contralto whom I had last heard at the Academy of Music in New York—who were escorted by a Yankee agent or *entrepreneur* with a strident voice, who made vehement complaints of the number of hundreds of dollars he had spent since the commencement of the journey on the luggage of his vocal charges. He could have bought a chest-tenor, he said, right out for half the money the said tenor's trunks had cost him. The tour, I am afraid, had not been a very profitable one. They squabbled a little every five miles or so, and the partitions of German carriages being but thin, their altercations were amusingly audible. The prima donna had a slight difficulty with her mamma—prima donnas and their parents never do agree; the basso went to sleep and snored; the contralto rallied the Yankee agent, who, still in the sulks on the luggage grievance, would not tell her what o'clock it was, and the chest-tenor, who seemed on the very best terms with himself, indulged us from time to time with gratuitous bursts of

song. In the end, however, harmony reigned. They must have had a prodigious basket of provisions with them, for the sounds of feasting were frequent; and on the whole they seemed to enjoy themselves in a jovial, good-humoured manner, as operatic people on their travels generally contrive to do.

"I fixed on Cassel for my abode," casually remarks Mrs. Haller's husband in *The Stranger*. It is just such a place as Mrs. Haller's husband *might* fix upon—just such a place as would have suited to a T that most sentimental, conceited, and drivelling noodle. I can imagine M. Kotzebue's hero in a hat and feathers mooning about the Belvedere, and the Wilhelmshöhe, and blowing his nose pathetically when he thinks of his beloved Adelaide. Cassel is a city of some pretensions, has nearly forty thousand inhabitants, boasts a palace as big as, and very much resembling, Barclay and Perkins's brewery highly ornamented; has a large though ill-arranged picture gallery containing some capital Rembrandts and Paul Potters, and is the capital of Electoral Hesse. The colossal Hercules in the Karlsburg is worth seeing; so is Jerome Bonaparte's pretty *al fresco* theatre; and at the opera house in the city some of the best music in Germany is said to be given; although, as the *dramatis personæ* are all government *employés*, and are never discharged but for misconduct, you run some risk of witnessing the performances of an antediluvian Amina and an Elvino bent double with the rheumatism. Cassel must have been a gay place

enough when it was the capital of the evanescent kingdom of Westphalia, and King Jerome held his court here—a queer court, a very queer court. All kinds of Bohemians and picaroons, from the Boulevards and the Palais Royal, fixed upon Cassel for their abode. Hairdressers sat in the high places, and billiard-markers were counsellors of state. It was a perpetual carnival —a continuous *descente de la courtille.* Sganarelle and Mascarille, Scapin and Cartouche, Guzman de Alfarache and Lazarillo de Tormes found it harvest-time for them. Ferdinand Count Fathom rode the high horse, and the exemplary M. Pigault le Brun, the Paul de Kock of the empire, was his Westphalian Majesty's private secretary. One puff of the cannon of Leipsic, and this card castle tumbled down.

Cassel is, however, still remarkable in an architectural sense. For a fifth-rate German town it really is sumptuously embellished. In the Königs Platz and the Friedrichs Platz and the Ausgarten palaces, and overgrown mansions abound; and there is a confluent eruption of allegorical groups, sculptured friezes, urns, triumphal arches, and fountains. All these bedizenments Cassel owes to the Elector Frederick the Second, who was a great patron of art. His means, however, were not equal to his taste. To supplement the former he hit upon the ingenious device of selling his subjects to be slaughtered in foreign wars. For a million of money he sold us three thousand Hessian soldiers, who were employed against Prince Charles in 'forty-five.

For three millions of money he sold us twelve thousand more Hessians, who were sent to America, in 1776, to be satisfactorily disposed of by the patriots led by Washington. There is a small and very destructive insect which is called the "Hessian fly"—a name given to it in the United States. It is there supposed to have been originally generated from the carcases of slain Hessians. Poor wretches! Four millions of money figure up very handsomely in thalers, and Elector Frederick was enabled to gratify his artistic tastes to the utmost. It is the knowledge of the source whence all this money came that makes you look upon the gew-gaw palaces of Cassel with loathing and contempt. And then you turn from the tinsel and the stone puppets to look upon a rickety, shabby town of narrow streets and mean hovels, unpaved, ill-drained, and, in fine, upon a population sallow, frowsy, and dejected.

I abode in Cassel, for my sins, two days. I never saw such a forlorn town; a second-hand Potsdam, a Versailles run to seed. The Königs Platz is of oval form, and has a remarkable echo in the centre; a fact curious in an acoustic sense, but scarcely conducive to cheerfulness. The Friedrichs Platz is said to be the largest square in any German town; beyond that, it struck me as being quite as dirty and not half so amusing as Glasgow Green. There were no signs of any trade or manufactures going on. There is a small army who are continually marching from the palace to the barracks, and from the barracks to the palace. I

hope they like it, and that promotion in the Hessian army goes by merit. If the seniority rule be followed, an officer can scarcely hope to rise to the rank of captain before he is a hundred years of age. About two-thirds of these braves find employment in mounting guard at the different palaces and public offices.

A very different town is Hanover, whither, in a very melancholy frame of mind, I proceeded from Cassel, but where I was only enabled to stay half a day. Hanover is, as the Americans would phrase it, "quite a place." New boulevards, skirted by handsome modern mansions, are rising all around the railway terminus; and the hotels are not surpassed in size and comfort by any in this part of Germany. The old town is delightfully quaint and picturesque; but the streets are drained and lit, and decently paved. There are plenty of ladies shopping; plenty of children trotting to and from school; and numerous handsome carriages and pairs. The Waterloo Platz, with the buildings which surround it, may in many respects vie with our Waterloo Place—and it is *not* disfigured by a Duke of York's column.

Both in Cassel and in Hanover you will find much that is suggestive of the history of your own country; but in the former town the associations are all disagreeable, whereas in the latter they are bright and cheery. The King's German Legion did yeoman's service at Waterloo; they have a better record than those miserable Hessians, bought and sold like sheep, and like sheep

driven to the slaughter. And there is something of the air of home, too, about Hanover. You remember that George V. was once Prince George of Cumberland—have we not all seen his portrait? a curly-headed little boy, in a skeleton suit, all frogged and braided—and that before the accession of his papa, who, much hated at home, was amazingly popular here. The Viceroy of Hanover, during many years, was the kind-hearted old Duke of Cambridge. You start when you meet the officers of the King's Guards and find them clad in flaming scarlet. You almost fancy that this is Pall Mall, and that yonder bow window belongs to the Guards' Club. It has a homely look to see the flourishing initials "G. R." on the lamp-posts and letter-boxes, and to find the lion and the unicorn—the white horse of Hanover being made a party to the suit—fighting for the crown over the apothecaries' and milliners' shop-doors. The railway guards and postmen also wear red coats; the face of the Sovereign on the thaler pieces wears, although sightless, a burly, honest, English expression; and in the royal stables is there not yet a stud of those famous cream-coloured coach horses, sacred to the traces of her Majesty's state carriage? The Corsican, it will be remembered, when he gobbled up Hanover, early in the present century, annexed all the cream-colours he could find in the Hanoverian stables, and had them harnessed to the state coach in which he was drawn to Nôtre Dame to be crowned. It is the only practical joke recorded of the usually satur-

nine Bonaparte. Poor George III. was in an awful passion at this desecration of his steeds; and until he was past the use of coaches and horses altogether, only used black ones.

I took a ticket from Hanover to, as I thought, Hamburg; and four hours after I had left the first-named place I was shot out at a place on the Elbe called Harburg, where I by no means advise you to go. It is not at all a nice place. It does not hold out the slightest inducements to tourists. There is no Dom, that I am aware of. There are no relics, and no paintings. There is no great organ even. I entreat you to give Harburg the go-by, as though it were Ashdod in plague time. Now Hamburg *is* a nice place—a very nice place; but to reach it through Harburg is to pay somewhat too dear for your whistle. The guide-books say that Harburg is a rapidly-increasing town of four thousand inhabitants. Is it? I fancy that the major part of the population must consist of belated travellers, who, unable to get any further on their way to Hamburg, have put up at the König von Schweden inn, and become moping idiots. "The view from the Schwarze Berg," continue the guide-books, "behind Harburg, is fine." Possibly; but people are not much inclined to ascend a black mountain when they have been packed for hours in a railway train, and want their supper, and wish to go to bed.

Perhaps you never tried to cross the Susquehanna in a railway train at dead of night, at the beginning of

winter, when the rain froze as it fell. Properly, the cars should be transported bodily on to a ferry-boat which steams across the widest part of the river, but there are sundry creeks which require drawbridges. Perhaps you never happened to find one of these contrivances "up" when your train arrived at the brink of the creek? The bridge-keeper is away at a dancing party, or is "tight" asleep. Providentially, the train has not tumbled into the water, but there you are, planted for an indefinite period. The sensations of agony, rage, and despair you undergo are analogous, I should say, to those I experienced when I found myself turned out of the train at Harburg, shivering on a bleak platform, and horribly alive to the new-born consciousness that Hamburg was ever so many miles off. It was a very dark night, and a very "dirty" one, as the sailors say; while the officials at the railway terminus were in a most indelicate hurry to turn off the gas. There was plenty of timber about, in beams, rails, bars, and uprights; and here and there a glimmering lamp mirrored itself in a marshy pool of water. The slimy mud was freezing as you walked, and the thin crust of ice crackled at every step. This was Harburg.

At this conjuncture a tall young man, with sore eyes, a desperate expression of countenance, and a large brass plate on his cap—like one of the climbing boys abolished under Dick Martin's Act—told me, with threatening gestures, that he wanted four thalers. I bade him seek for those coins at Hong Kong. By this time there came

over me a hazy remembrance that I had been at Harburg before, not while coming from Hanover, but in going to it; that it was a long way from anywhere, but that there existed communication between it and Hamburg by means of a steamboat. I acknowledge this with shame. What had become of my topographical memory? But nearly ten years had elapsed since I had last been in this part of Europe. Hamburg was in those days rather a noisy place, where the time slipped by unreckoned—as most things did ten years ago—and I had just come from Schleswig-Holstein, a sojourn in which I will back against any other, except the Land of Nod, for confusing a man's mind and giving him cloudy and indistinct notions of things. Until you have sat in a wooden porch at the top of a flight of steps, and smoked a pipe with the Old Men of Rendsburg, you can have no idea what it is to eat lotuses, and board and lodge in a dry skittle-alley in Sleepy Hollow. My mind, however, had just sufficient tenacity to remember the steamer in the Elbe; so, ejaculating "Dampfschiff" and "Hamburg," I invoked the deities of luck. It was not far from that time of night when churchyards are supposed to yawn, graves to give up their dead, and wicked dreams to abuse the curtained ear of sleep. My invocation of the "Dampfschiff" was productive of some result in the appearance of a hairy-faced man, likewise bearing a large brass plate on his cap, and who was, in truth, a cab-driver. This person agreed to take

me to the Victoria Hotel, Hamburg, for eleven marks —had he mentioned eleven Macheros, or eleven Jules, it would have been about the same. I consequently surrendered myself and baggage to the hairy-faced man, expecting in about ten minutes or so to find myself on the Alster Bassin at Hamburg.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTMAS AT HAMBURG—HAMBURG COINAGE—TOYS AND PRESENTS—THE STADT THEATRE.

WITH a moderate load of luggage and a horse going at a decent pace it is a drive of precisely one hour and twenty minutes from the railway terminus, Harburg, to the Alster Bassin. At the end of the first half hour, when the driver alighted, paid the ferry toll, and then drove on board a steamer, I thought the other side was Hamburg; but, alack, another half hour of dismal, dark, marshy road had to be travelled; then the driver had to alight again, pay another toll, drive on board another steamboat, and land on another shore. At length, just as acute mania was developing itself in the occupant of the cab, the lights of a great city came in view, and we plunged into a maze of dirty, tortuous, ill-paved streets, intersected by innumerable bridges, from whose parapets I could see the gas glancing in the black, stagnant waters of the canals. A thrill of horror shot through me. Could this be Hamburg—the Paris of North Germany? Had I not, through some horrible blunder, got back to Amsterdam? But I was speedily reassured. Anon we left the tortuous lanes

and black canals behind us, and the carriage wheels rolled swiftly over the macadam of the magnificent thoroughfares, as broad as Regent Street, as straight as Buchanan Street, Glasgow, as handsome as Prince's Street, Edinburgh, as gay as the Rue de la Paix—thoroughfares all glittering with gas, and, late at night as it was, thronged with a murmuring crowd, who clustered before the great blazing shops full of rich merchandize; for it was Christmas-time, and Hamburg was holding high festival, and every street was a fair, and the shopkeepers were driving a roaring trade, and on the hearts of the juvenile population there was written, I am afraid, the legend, "We wont go home till morning."

I just hinted that, ten years ago, I found Hamburg a noisy place. You could hear the chimes at midnight from the steeple of St. Michael's Church—which they say is fifty feet taller than our St. Paul's. If the city gates were shut when you came back from an outing at Altona, you could lie all night by the windmills in St. George's Fields. How cheap the champagne was in Hamburg, and how good at the price! Could there be anything more picturesque than the costumes of the Vierländerin maidens, or prettier than those maidens themselves? You had, in short, rather a jovial time at Hamburg, and you had a jovial crew of companions with you. There was that wicked, witty old Sir John Falstaff, and young Shallow from the Inns of Court; Black George of Staffordshire; with Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph, officers in the army, who have since sold out,

or come to grief, or settled down. You don't care quite so much about the joviality of Hamburg now. You grumble at the time it took you to come from Harburg, and think that the shops ought to be shut at twelve o'clock at night, and wonder whether the beds at the Victoria will be aired, and whether you will be able to get any tea. Yes; ten years make an appreciable difference in one's thoughts, and likings, and dislikings.

It strikes me that this Harburg-Hamburg business is one eminently disgraceful to a wealthy city of two hundred thousand inhabitants. With a railway bridge, such as the Austrians have built over the lagoons between Mestre and Venice, the distance between Harburg and Hamburg could be traversed in ten minutes; and were Harburg the direct route to Berlin, we should long since have seen such a bridge erected. The Hamburgers, however, plead that this hiatus is no fault of theirs. Although they have been compelled during the last twenty years to borrow sums so enormous that they have now, in proportion to their population, the largest national debt of any State in Europe, they profess to be willing to meet the Hanoverian Government half-way. Let it build half the causeway and the S. P. Q. H. will complete the remaining moiety. Hanover, however, declares she has no money at all for anything. The compensation paid for the abolition of the Elbe dues was promised to another party; she has been disappointed in the City; she will see about it

next year. Meanwhile, the causeway remains unconstructed. Would it not be a step in advance if Hamburg built her promised half, and so shamed Hanover into building hers? To this it may be objected that there are some people who are not to be shamed into anything. To that body which really suffers—the public—the gap in the communication seems scandalous. There is, it appears, a steamboat which, so many times a day and threading divers narrow channels, makes the whole passage between the two places by water; but we were too late for this vessel, and had to accomplish the journey half by land, half by ferries, across arms of the Elbe. Setting on one side the grievous loss of time, it may be mentioned that the legal cab fare between Hamburg and Harburg is eleven current marks, about thirteen shillings sterling. I can only attempt to realize the discomfort and inconvenience thus endured by begging a stay-at-home traveller to suppose that, having taken a ticket per South-Western from Southampton to London, he is turned out to graze on Wimbledon Common, to find his way to the Charing Cross Hotel as best he can.

When once fairly ensconced, however, in Hamburg you find very little else whereat to grumble. Stay, there is just one little thing—one that comes home to every man's inner heart—I mean the heart which is in his pocket. For a thriving, industrious city, which has been in business for many centuries, and untrammelled by the oppression of coin-clipping, currency-

debasing, petty potentates, Hamburg has perhaps the most villanous coinage to be found anywhere out of Turkey in Asia. There are many valid objections to be urged against paper money; although, when the notes are decently whole and clean, the denominations not too small, and the issue itself not at a ruinous discount, I hold a paper currency to be tolerable, and even commodious. And I would certainly rather have my pockets full of greenbacks, or shin-plasters, or even the greasy little five and ten cent "spondontials," than of the filthy and worthless testers which pass for money in Hamburg. In the important principality of Monaco the *jetons*, or counters, used at the Prince's gambling house, are the principal circulating medium. I declare that I would rather have even that immoral small change than the vile stuff they palm upon you in this free and imperial city.

The coinage looks business-like enough on paper, it must be admitted. There is first the mark banco, which is wholly imaginary. There is the mark courant, which is worth one shilling and twopence halfpenny English. This piece is said to be of very ancient mintage, and to be made of the purest silver. The consequence is, that you never see a mark courant now. Whenever one furtively finds its way into circulation the shopkeepers eagerly seize hold of it, and put it in a stocking or bury it in the ground. Then comes the double mark, which is even more precious than its single brother, and more rarely met with. We next come to

the rix-dollar, or Danish rigs-daler, which used to be common enough when I knew Hamburg ten years since, and the Danes were in force at the neighbouring town of Altona. But it has now almost wholly disappeared. In compensation there are plenty of schillings, with pieces of eight and four ditto. The schilling is worth something under a penny. It is round and flat, and that is the best you can say about it. The legend has long since disappeared, and it is thickly encrusted with dirt; so thickly, indeed, that the doctors say you positively run the risk of catching infectious diseases by handling schillings. It is not made of any metal known to numismatists. It may be copper, or pewter, or tin, but what it really is remains a mystery. Place it under a very strong magnifying glass, and you may make out on the obverse a dim representation of three towers. The pieces of eight also, when intently inspected may be found to bear the date of 1727, and an inscription relating to one Carolus, "Imp. Rom. Semper Augustus"—who flourished, I suspect, about that time as Emperor of Germany. It is in these most contemptible counters—more contemptible than Mexican "*claquos*," or Jamaica "bits," or New Orleans "picayunes"—that the great and prosperous city of Hamburg does business. The accounts of the hotels are all made out in marks courant and schillings; but—as there are no visible marks, and as to pay a week's bill you would require a weight of schillings equal to that bag of copper money with which the avaricious

picture-dealer paid Correggio, and the burden of which, according to the doubtful story, was the cause of the painter's death—you pay, really, in Prussian money, losing, of course, heavily by the exchange.

The money-changers of Hamburg are the greatest rogues I know out of Ratcliffe-highway; and the most sensible plan of conducting pecuniary affairs here would be to get into debt as long and as deeply as anybody will trust you, and then pay in the lump with what the banker gives you for a circular note. Small change is simply ruin; for outside the city, a Hamburgh schilling is of no more value than a wild-cat note of the Bank of Shoshowannaperrawabit. The Hamburgers, even, have great difficulty in verifying the status of their own coins, and honestly confess that the schillings they give you may be Hanoverian pfennings or Bavarian kreutzers. For a business people, they have certainly odd ways. I bought a pair of gloves, and having neither schillings nor thaler notes about me, proffered a gold Frederick, which is worth about sixteen shillings English, in payment. The shopkeeper gazed upon this coin with a kind of ecstacy. He carefully weighed it; then examined it through a glass to ascertain that it had not been clipped, double-milled, or sweated; then he looked at the course of exchange in the *Hamburger Courant* to see what Fredericks were worth that fine morning; then he took it across the road and sought the opinion of a friend of his who sold furs. The friend's verdict was

that its value amounted to fifteen shillings English: this was logical enough, for the piece is marked five thalers. I knew better, however; I was aware that its real value was ten groschen, or twelvepence English, additional. So we had a little squabble, and the shopkeeper offered to split the difference, and I threw the gloves back on his hands, and he followed me out, and there was a reconciliation, and I suppose that in the end I did not lose more than sixpence by the transaction.

Let me conclude my brief experience of business in Hamburg by remarking that, at the offices of one eminent banking firm at least, they have a merry custom of shutting up the cashier's department from one until four o'clock P.M. The offices being situated about two miles from the new or habitable part of the town, the facetiousness of this proceeding may be appreciated, especially if your money has run out and you wish to go away by a train leaving at two. Being at Hamburg, however, you are bound to do as the Hamburgers do; and they have a clear right to settle their banking arrangements in the way most convenient to themselves. But only imagine the disturbance there would be in Fleet-street or Lothbury if the banks closed their paying counters between one and four. In the south of Europe you know what to expect. In Italy no one dreams of bothering a banker during the afternoon heats. Even at Marseilles they indulge in the *siesta* from noon till three; and at

Algiers I remember calling with a very modest draft on a most affable but perspiring banker, who received me in his shirtsleeves, gave me a cigarette, regretted that he really had not so much money in the *caisse*, but offered to lend me a couple of Napoleons for present necessities, stating that if I would look in after change hours he would give me the balance. And stop! I will cap these banking reminiscences by one little anecdote. I went to a banker's at Vera Cruz once, to draw some money on a letter of credit. I don't think the cashier, who was a cautious German, liked my look. It was very early in the morning—for the English packet was in the offing, and I was feverishly anxious to be gone from the city of *el vomito*. Upon my word, before the cashier opened the great iron strong box to dole me out my doubloons, I saw him pass from his hinder pocket to his breast one a small but serviceable revolver. I think that cashier was thoroughly imbued with the belief that I had been robbing the stage-coach, and had not come honestly by that letter of credit; and I am sure he was devoutly glad to see my back.

There is a reason for everything, even in roasting eggs, if we will only strive to root and think it out. Is not the paucity of the circulating medium in Hamburg—well nigh incredible when the notorious wealth of its merchants, bankers, and traders is borne in mind—due to one very sufficient cause, namely, the grievous oppression undergone by the inhabitants during the

occupation of Hamburg by the French from 1809 to to 1813? They were subjected during long years to the merciless rule of the terrible Davoust. This man, who was a kind of Empson and Dudley grafted on to an Attila or an Alva, had a hydraulic-pressure capacity for screwing money out of people. He was always exacting thousands of marks courant from the Hamburgers, and hanging the most respectable citizens by twenties at a time on a low gallows in front of the Alster Pavilion, if they were slow in complying with his demands. Under such a régime, the natural tendency of mankind is to hoard; and fifty years of peace and liberty have not cured the good folks of Hamburg of that habit, acquired under the grinding rule of the Prince of Eckmühl, of hiding away their solid cash.

The absence of reputable looking money, however, could not have prevented the spending of an enormous amount of cash this Christmas at Hamburg. It was my privilege to assist for four days at a new and revised edition of the festival of St. Nicholas, infinitely surpassing in pomp and grandeur the sober toy festival of the Hollanders. Long lines of booths, full of playthings and sweetmeats, lined all the great thoroughfares, and from early in the morning until very late at night they were surrounded by masses of eager purchasers. Gattinacca in gingerbread pantaloons and highly gilt cumbered the shelves; all the heroes of the Niebelungen Lied, all the warriors and bards of the

Walhalla, made their appearance in chocolate and sugar candy. In the aristocratic streets, such as the Alsterdamm and the Alte and Neue Jungfernstieg, these sweetstuff shops grew to colossal proportions, and displayed palatial decorations. Before many of them even the great Siraudin, of the Rue de la Paix, might have hidden his diminished head. Christmas at Hamburg appears to be not only a season when toys are given to children, as it is in Holland, but when presents—often magnificent ones—are interchanged between grown-up persons. There is a bazaar close to Stuit's Hotel, which is like the Passage des Panoramas; only they make you pay five schillings—'tis less than sixpence—for visiting it in the evening. Two brass bands—one at the upper, the other at the lower end of the bazaar—discourse sweet sounds from six until ten. You have a drawback on your admission money in the shape of a ticket, which entitles you to three schillings worth of soap, or sugarplums, or scent, or something that cannot possibly do you any good. By means of this donative dust adroitly thrown into your eyes, wily traders hope to entice you into their shops, there to spend fabulous numbers of marks courant. Everybody seems to be buying something. The humblest working woman carries a huge slab of gingerbread under her arm. The meanest street child hugs its Christmas doll. The raggedest boy bears home some few sprigs of a Christmas tree. It is to me a wholesome sign that *all* have a part in the great festivity.

In England we keep Christmas merrily enough. The rich, the well-to-do, the frugal, the industrious—all enjoy themselves. They have their Christmas feasts and parties and merry-makings. But all at once a broad black line is drawn across. There is an immense class in all large English towns to whom Christmas means simply an opportunity for getting drunk from Christmas Eve to the morrow of Boxing-day. The convict in Newgate has his extra rations; the pauper in the workhouse has his beef and pudding, his nuts and oranges—"it is only once a year;" but you would be astounded did you know how many thousands of people there are in London, in full work, and earning decent wages, who no more dream of having a real Christmas dinner than of feeding off turtle and venison with a golden spoon. How many wretched women there are whose Christmas fare is a cup of tea and a black eye; how many gaunt children who only remember Christmas as the time when father drank the two bottles of gin, and lost in a fight the goose which he won at the club, and came home and beat mother, and was locked up!

I suppose there are idle and improvident people at Hamburg as everywhere else. There are certainly "beer tunnels" and "beer cellars" enough at every corner to besot twice two hundred thousand people; but I did not see any intoxicated persons this Christmas at Hamburg. They were in the cellars, perhaps, whither I did not follow them. I observed, on the

other hand, an immense amount of fun and frolic; legions of fur-clad young ladies, tribes of happy children, troops of fathers of families who should have carried porters' knots, so heavy was their fardel of toys; cafés, restaurants, and tables d'hôte crammed; champagne flowing, glasses clinking, and in every open space whole fir forests transplanted to furnish forth those pretty—and pagan—Christmas trees. Yes, Hamburg was very noisy and very gay; but the noise and the gaiety were not those of ten years ago. Ancient Pistol of the Life Guards Black, Captain Bardolph of the Cocktail Rangers, would have pronounced the scene "slow," I fear.

To crown all, when I asked what the performance was at the handsome Stadt Theatre, and expected to be told, *à l'invariable*, that it was *Robert le Diable*, or *Lucia di Lammermoor*, I was informed that the great house had been given up during the Christmas holidays exclusively to the children. The hotel porter would scarcely consent to purchase stalls for me. The performance was too absurd, he said. I went, however, and witnessed with delight a great pantomimico-terpsichorean spectacle entitled *The Enchanted Tailor*; *or, Snip's Journey to Fairy Land*. With the exception of one adult, who played the bear, the performers were all children, and with infinite grace did they enact their parts. These were indeed the famous "*Ballet Elèves*," eighty-three in number, the pupils of Fräulein Somebody. Do you remember the *Enfants Viennoises* at Her Majesty's in Mr. Lumley's

time, and that pretty *pas des Miroirs* so wonderfully caricatured in *Punch?* Well, multiply the Viennese children by four, and you have the eighty-three ballet *élèves* of Fräulein Somebody; and when a dance had been particularly well executed and the audience recalled the dancers, the Fräulein herself, in a modest robe of Scotch plaid, led on her pupils, and blushingly shared in the plaudits. It made you rather nervous to see that the eighty-three *ballet élèves* manifested occasional symptoms of a desire to have a little game on their own account, and to gambol about the stage in defiance of the code of *ballet* manœuvres; and I am afraid the Fräulein had to shake her fist a good deal from the side scenes to ensure precision in the performance of the more complicated evolutions.

The little tailor was enacted by a most clever and graceful little girl, who could not have been more than eight years old; and I am glad to say that the spectacle concluded by a kind of sartorial apotheosis, in which, invested with golden shears and goose, the hero was taken up to the realms of bliss in the car of a balloon, attended by winged fairies and illumined by the electric light; thus rendering nugatory the spiteful, savage "tag" to the English version of the legend, which sets forth that "The devil flies away with the little tailor boy, with his broadcloth under his arm." Why this English prejudice against tailors? Does it date from the time when Britons stained themselves with woad, and thought "blue and buff" the only apparel for a

gentleman? The drollest part of the spectacle at the Stadt theatre was, that nine-tenths of the audience were under nine years of age. At the first glance you thought that all the spectators were in the pit, and that the four tiers of boxes were empty; but, at the conclusion of every scene, legions of little hands manifested themselves upon the ledges, and were vehemently clapped together, while hundreds of shrill little voices crowed delight. The little white hands looked like fluttering flocks of pigeons, all of which things did one good somehow to see and hear.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRUSSIAN CAPITAL — ITS DRAWBACKS — THE OLD SCHLOSS — ROYALTY IN PUBLIC — THE PRUSSIAN GUARDSMAN.

I HAVE always sympathised with the nameless Oxford undergraduate who didn't like Doctor Fell. To be sure the admission of distaste for an individual without the power to assign the reason why, was not quite original, having been very vigorously expressed in an epigram, several centuries before, by one Martial. But there is in the confession of dislike to Dr. Fell —the reason why, the undergraduate couldn't tell—a candour and an ingenuousness that pull, somehow, irresistibly at the heartstrings. Who is there among us that has not some special object of repugnance—some intimate *bête noire*—and yet is puzzled to define the cause of his misliking? We hate a man for his hat, or his whiskers, or the manner in which he cracks walnuts. We hate a book for its binding, or the paper on which it is printed. We abandon a house for a repulsive window on the second-floor landing. There is little use in reasoning with ourselves. We don't like it; and there is an end of the matter. The poor, who

have a virtual monopoly of terse locutions, very exhaustively sum up their Dr. Fellism when they declare that they "can't abide" anything. There is the secret. We cannot abide Dr. Fell; we cannot live with him or near him; and the reason why, we cannot tell. It is extremely probable that Doctor Fell was a very good sort of man, and popular among the Dons of his day; nay, we have certain evidence that somebody *did* like him, for, in the last will and testament of Burton, author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy," we find this remarkable clause; "Item. To Master Doctor Fell I leave my second best bed." Or, I am not certain, being many hundreds of miles from my authority, that it wasn't forty shillings. But, at all events, Doctor Fell had his legacy.

Knowing what a mysterious, reason-defying, will-balking feeling is the one dwelt on in the preceding paragraph, I can fully realise the probability of a chance tourist in Germany not liking the capital of Prussia. Try his hardest to admire Berlin; laboriously plod through its palaces and picture galleries; render full justice to its undeniable architectural merits as he may, the city soon palls upon him, subsequently wearies, and ultimately disgusts him. He can assign no reason for being a malcontent. The place is full of enjoyment. The theatres are numerous and splendid. Postal communication with England is both quick and punctual. You are no longer bothered about passports or *permis de séjour*. The guide-books tell you that,

properly recommended, you may find agreeable literary society among the professors of the university, and sit at the feet of Savigny the jurist, Rank and Von Raumer the historians, Ehrenberg the naturalist, Von Buch the geologist, Böckh the classical antiquary, Schelling the metaphysician, and Cornelius the painter; and although the travellers' Koran adds, after enumerating the hotels, "*the inns in general are not good*"—italicising the assertion—I have found the Hôtel d'Angleterre a very comfortable and luxurious hostelry, with an excellent *table d'hôte*, a choice cellar, and beds requiring no warming pans.

If you are a connoisseur in art, there is a wonderful collection of the early German masters in the Museum; if you wish to see Versailles translated into German text, you may take the train to Potsdam; if you are fond of sculpture, you will find a bridge and a boulevard sown as thick with statues as an English railway station with "Sydenham trousers" and "Benson's watches;" if your tastes are bellicose, you may see every variety of military uniform and military manœuvre in the course of the twenty-four hours—for the garrison of Berlin is so large that the city looks like a camp; if you are fond of beer, you will find all Berlin undermined with convivial sewers, subways, tunnels, and underground potteries; if you are a student of Carlyle, you may take the sage of Chelsea's masterpiece—which the Prussian Dryasdusts do not, as a rule, admire, the reason why they know full well—and see the Great Frederick on

the Linden and in bronze by Rauch, with an ermine mantle—which he never wore—over his shoulders, and his generals and statesmen grouped round the pedestal beneath his horse's feet; or, in imagination, you may see him taking his morning walk on the terrace at Potsdam, in that historical cocked hat, and that immortal pigtail, and those jackboots more celebrated than the boots of Bombastes—and which Mr. Carlyle is so careful to tell us were innocent of the "sootpots" of Day and Martin, and were carefully greased. You may see the *Tabaks Collegium* where the heroic brute his papa, wearied by the labours of statecraft and the fatigue of thrashing his wife and daughter, came to refresh his exhausted energies with tobacco and swipes. And you may see the tomb of the Great Frederick, and wonder what became of the hero's sword, which, to use an elegant American expression, the Great Napoleon "kinder thove."

Now, is there any excuse for a traveller who, with all these enjoyments easily accessible, with health, strength, a good conscience, and money in his pocket, yet owns that he doesn't like Berlin? I am afraid that there are many who do not. Even the cheerful "Murray," who generally does his best to make you look on the bright side of things, observes: "The mere passing traveller, in search of amusement, will soon exhaust the sights of Berlin, and find it dull and less attractive than most of the great European capitals." Pray let it be frankly understood that the traveller *I* touched upon

was a purely hypothetical one. I like Berlin as I do everybody and everything that has being. No capital, Cassel perhaps excepted, to me can seem dull or unattractive. To him who has been blind, one ray of light, even though it come through a dirty window-pane, is felicity. He who has been hanged and brought to life again, will scarcely grumble because there is too much starch in his collars. No European capital can seem wholly dull, utterly wretched, perfectly intolerable to one who has visited the horror of horrors—has descended, in company with Messrs. Dante and Virgil, poets, and come up again; who has dwelt in Washington, in the district of Columbia.

Were the causes of the disfavour with which too many persons regard this important, stately, and bustling city—the seat of one of the most powerful monarchies in Europe, and the habitat of a most intelligent and industrious population—were these causes studiously analysed, they might be found, perhaps, to resolve themselves into three principal heads: the first, that Berlin contains little or nothing that is venerable; the second, that the surrounding country is exceedingly ugly; the third, that there is no valid excuse for the existence of Berlin as a capital city, in its actual position, at all. *Elle n'a pas sa raison d'être.* When Peter the Great ordered Basil of the Island to build him a city among the swamps and back-waters of the Neva, he did so because the site was so very like his beloved Holland, and he was determined to have an Amsterdam

of his own; and in the Gulf of Finland, close by, he had a nobler Zuyder Zee. The uncomfortable situation of Madrid is to be pardoned for the sake of its antiquity—for the sake of Cervantes and Le Sage. But these pleas cannot be urged in favour of Berlin. It is a caprice without fancy, and a blunder devoid of humour. Why should it have been built in the middle of a vast, dreary plain, with a delusive sprinkling of grey-green herbage, but which underneath is as sandy as the Sahara? A hundred and fifty years ago it was a little *bourgade,* occupying only one islet on the right bank of the contemptible rivulet, the Spree. Why should its population have increased tenfold since the time of Frederick I.? The indomitable will of the greater Fritz may be adduced as a reason; but I have heard it said that the friend of Voltaire and Maupertuis never liked Berlin, and much preferred Potsdam. He could not "abide" his own capital, just as Louis XIV. could never abide Paris.

Still Berlin has grown to gigantic proportions; nobody knows why. Manchester and Glasgow have exhibited within our time an equally sudden and surprising increase in size and population; but Glasgow and Manchester are both ancient cities. The first had St. Mungo; in the other the Collegiate Church was a nucleus; and the distension of both are directly due to the same imperial cause, the cotton manufacture. But Berlin manufactures nothing but beer, bad porcelain, and cast-iron busts and bracelets. She has none

of the requisites of a city. The Spree is not wider than the Cray or the Dart. There is not even a hill of respectable altitude in the neighbourhood whence a hostile general could bombard Berlin. There is little stone to be found in the vicinity, and some of the finest building are, perforce, of brick and stucco. The site of the city is one uniform level, and the sewage stagnates in the drains. In winter time this does not so much matter; but I had a month in Berlin once in a warm spring time, ten years ago, and I preserve direful reminiscences of noisome stenches that came scouring over the Schloss-brücke, like the wells in *Giselle*, and trooping along the Linden like squadrons of dragoons. The simile is not so very far-fetched, for the bad smells of Berlin are in hot weather attended by clouds of dust; and the heat of the sun, reflected by the sandy clouds and the sandy pavement, is almost unendurable.

In spite of these undeniable disadvantages—in spite of sand and dust and unwholsome odours—in spite of the execrable pavement and the defective *trottoirs* and the yawning gutters, which have to be bridged in many places with planks, Berlin has flourished, is flourishing, and will continue, I hope—being in charity with all mankind—to flourish. Its population at present is not much under half a million, and statistics show it to be rapidly increasing. Although infamously paved, the city is brilliantly lit with gas; the police force is numerous and efficient, the cabs are good and cheap; there are plenty of omnibuses, plenty of beer-shops,

plenty of restaurants, plenty of *cafés*, and plenty of newspapers. And yet there are people who don't like Berlin.

I have already mentioned as a drawback to the perfection of glorious old Antwerp, that it has no main street. From such a deficiency Berlin does not suffer. Not only is its main thoroughfare one of the most grandiose in Europe, but critics have gone so far as to declare that Berlin, like Brompton, Rochester, Chatham, and Strood, is all one main street; that the main street in question is Unter den Linden; and that Unter den Linden is the only street worth the attention of a stranger in Berlin. The tourist who visits Paris for the first time is usually advised to take his stand by the Luxor Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, whence, turning his head to the various points of the compass, but without displacement of his body, he may take in the *coup d'œil* of the Tuileries with its gardens, the Rue de Rivoli with its arcades, the Rue Royale with the Madeleine, the Champs Elysées with the Arc de l'Etoile, and the Pont de la Concorde with the Palace of the Legislative Body. The designers who laid out these marvellous vistas have been able to set up one point of departure from which the whole scene can be surveyed, as the Third Napoleon surveyed the fight at Magenta from that balcony in the village of Ponte Nuovo. There is scarcely such a *point de mire* in Berlin; but by taking up a position first at one point and then at another the chief features of the town may be seen. Stand on the

Schloss-brücke—the Castle Bridge—and you will behold half the architectural glories of which Berlin can boast: the Old Palace, the Museum, the Lust-Garten, the Royal Library, and the Cathedral. Then go to the base of Frederick's statue in the Linden, and—in the Opera House, the Monbijou Palace and that of the Prince of Prussia, the University, the Great Guard-house, and the Arsenal, with the shady arcades of the Linden and the Brandenburg Gate in the distance—you will behold the remaining moiety of the buildings of which Berlin is proud. Of the remaining seven-eighths of the Prussian capital it may be written, as of too many huge human beehives in England—streets and houses, houses and streets, and nothing more.

As for that Schloss, that old palace, it is very sumptuously furnished within, and its *Weisse Saal*, in which the legislative session is usually opened by the Sovereign in person, may be as magnificent as the "glorious gallery" in that other Whitehall which we moderns were not permitted to see, as it was burnt down in the time of William III. But the exterior of the Schloss, grand as it is, surpasses in gloom the façade of the British Museum, which is saying a good deal—abating only those hideous glazed sheds, crammed with antiquarian lumber, which, to the scandal of the English nation, are yet permitted to disfigure the portico in Bloomsbury. The old Schloss is haunted, they say, by a phantom known as the "White Lady;"

but she has not succeeded in imparting any reflex of her hue to the palace she favours with her presence. Its walls would be decidedly the better for blanching, and the great cupola is as black and nearly as big as St. Paul's. It is of noble proportions, however, and no Borussian Branch of the egregious London, Chatham, and Dover Railway has been permitted to hide it from the gaze of the Berliners. And finally, the inside of this old Schloss is worth a visit, not only for its reputed ghost and its grand decorations—which are in the usual style of Royal upholstery—but for the sake of that consummately beautiful picture, by Lessing, the "Lenore," out of Bürger's ballad. What an epic of love and terror, devotion and despair, is there in this picture —what tearful faith in Lenore's eyes; what dreadful hopeless vacancy in those of the phantom trooper! "The dead ride fast"—the very steed in this picture is the Pale Horse of Scripture, with the saddle and bridle of a Prussian dragoon.

It would throw, I am afraid, our Lord Chamberlain into fits, and cause the Board of Green Cloth to turn black in the face, to be told that there is a public right of way through the outer and inner courts of the Royal Palace at Berlin, and that a constant stream of foot passengers passes from the Lust-Garten to the Schloss Platz all day long. This is not the first time that I have had to touch on the odd mixture of familiarity with reverence for rank to be found on the Continent. The state of things existing, or lately existent, in

Scotland—where a cottar was often hail-fellow-well-met with an earl, but where, nevertheless, a gulf deep as Acheron yawned between the two—and the footing which Burns was on with his noble patrons, is the most forcible illustration of this I can call to mind; the poet was sent reeling from the tables of the great to take up the gauger's inkhorn—this state of things often finds a close parallel enough in the terms which Continental monarchs are on with their subjects. There is no derogation of dignity here if a field-marshal in full uniform pulls up his horse before a sentry-box, and seeing the sentinel to be manifestly afflicted with a cold in his head, asks him why he is not on the sick-list? A prince of the blood suffers no loss of dignity by walking about the Linden arm-in-arm with an aide-de-camp, and entering a cigar-shop to fill his case. At the Hague, I saw the Prince of Orange, heir-apparent to the crown of the Netherlands, buying *cartes de visite* in a stationer's shop. Why shouldn't he? Why shouldn't royal folk walk about the streets if they like? Their feet are not "golden lilies," like those of the Chinese ladies. Unfortunately, whenever royalty does make its appearance in England, we are apt to mob it, to tread upon its heels, to stare in its face, and generally to drive it, tired and disgusted, home to its palace again. What metamorphosis of snobbery has come over a free people, I wonder, since Charles II. walked among his subjects in St. James's Park, to feed the ducks in Rosamond's Pond?

There is certainly one little inconvenience attendant upon this unceremonious mingling of Royalty with the meaner sort. You are expected to raise your hat every time you pass Royalty in a plain frock coat, walking arm-in-arm with its aide-de-camp. There being usually one favourite promenade in all Continental cities, you run the risk of meeting Royalty rather too frequently for your personal comfort. I remember, for example, that at Turin, last summer, the Royal Princes were in the habit of driving every afternoon ten or twelve times round the Piazza d'Armi, and you, in a modest fiacre at two francs an hour, were bound to salute Royalty at least twenty-four times. Nor, if you were a pedestrian, were you better off, for the Royal Princes often took it into their heads to alight from their carriages and walk; and you had hard work to avoid running up against Royalty at innumerable corners.

The same perils menace you in Germany. Remove your head-covering you must. A hundred watchful eyes are upon you; nay, were you to omit the customary salutation, the Sovereign himself might take notice of the affront, and an official personage subsequently wait on you for explanations at your hotel. His Majesty of Mecklenburg, you will remember, is scrupulously particular in the way of bows and reverences; and it is related that King Louis of Bavaria—not the *Tannhäuser* King, but the Lola Montez one—did once most forcibly admonish an inattentive Englishman who passed him on the promenade, by knocking

off, with his own royal hands, the hat which the churlish Briton had neglected to remove. They used to be exceedingly particular—even to a disagreeable degree of pedantry—on this head in Prussia; and on the occasion of my first visit to Berlin, I once had a few words with a punctilious police-officer at the Opera House, who insisted that I had no right to put on my hat, even when the performances had come to an end, until I had reached the outer lobby. He pointed to the royal box, and shouted "*Der König!*" meaning, I suppose, that by covering myself in the presence of an empty private box—for the poor king was away at Charlottenburg, sick and imbecile—I was offering an insult to the House of Hohenzollern. We did not fight; principally, perhaps, because I didn't understand any of the German he bellowed forth, and he didn't understand any of the Anglo-Saxon elegances which I showered on his highly-ornamented helmet. This was in Herr von Hinckeldey's time, I think—the police despot who was at last snuffed out in a duel—and the Berlin police used to give peaceable travellers an immensity of trouble. There was always a man in a helmet dogging your footsteps, and asking impertinent questions. Of these there were as many in the hotel police ledger as in a proposal for life assurance. "What are you doing?" "Where are you going?"—as if any man knew where he was going. "What are your means?" "How do you justify yourself?"—which last query a Scotch traveller might have held to

be a direct provocation to a controversy as to Faith *versus* Works.

It is a very hopeful sign of the times that this impertinent meddling with other people's business is no part of the present administrative system of Prussia. Of the intentional rudeness, said to have been offered by Prussian innkeepers and officials to English travellers during the Schleswig-Holstein war, I have no means of judging; but at present any inimical feeling, if ever it existed, seems to have altogether died away. I don't like the Germans, their country, or their ways, or anything which is theirs; but it would be highly unjust to withhold a tribute of acknowledgment for the eager civility they display in their bearing towards Englishmen. By this is not meant mere inn-civility; the courtesy you receive at the hotels is purchaseable, is in proportion to the wine you order, and is charged for pretty stiffly in the *Rechnung*; but politeness from persons who cannot make anything by being polite—railway clerks, post-office *employés*, police agents, and the like. Their great delight is when they can speak a little English, to be able to air it in conversation with an Englishman. Very lately a friend in London sent me a copy of *Punch*, in one page of which he had very imprudently scribbled a facetious reference to the subject of the chief cartoon. Now this is defrauding the revenue all the world over. The authorities had taken the band off *Punch*, not, I am inclined to think, with a view of finding out whether there was anything

uncomplimentary to his Majesty William I. in the contents, but rather in the hope of discovering something funnier in its pages than ordinarily embellishes those of the *Kladderadatsch*. My friend's imprudent scrawl was "spotted." Ten years ago there would have been a tremendous fuss made over this violation of the postal code. The paper would have been confiscated; and dire pains and penalties threatened against the perpetrator and accessories both before and after the fact. But they manage these things differently in Prussia now-a-days. The clerk at the *Poste Restante*, who looked by the way as though he had been laughing heartily over *Punch*, spoke a little English; told me it was a "ver bad thing to do," but that this time the authorities would allow the matter to pass. And he gave me my *Punch*.

One had heard so much about the evil relations which existed between the Sovereign of Prussia and his subjects, that I expected, when I came to Berlin, to find William I. shrouded in impenetrable seclusion, or venturing abroad only in a carriage with sheet-iron panels, driven at a rapid rate, and closely surrounded by cuirassiers with their swords drawn. There is nothing of this kind to be seen. His Majesty's son and daughter-in-law live in a much finer house and keep up far more state than he himself does. I saw the eldest daughter of England, and future Queen of Prussia, in deep mourning for the King of the Belgians, but looking still very bright and comely, taking an airing on the

Linden in a carriage and four splendidly appointed, and preceded by outriders. But the next afternoon I saw leisurely driving from the Brandenburg Gate a little, low, plain, open phaeton, drawn by two plump black ponies. There was no escort, there were no outriders, equerries, or flunkies even, beyond on the box, beside the coachman, a chasseur with a cocked hat and feather. No Minister Resident from a minor principality could have taken the air in plainer trim. Reclining in the phaeton, his martial cloak—and it was more than a middle-aged cloak—around him, and the usual spiky helmet on his head, was a frank, bluff-looking old gentleman, with grey whiskers and moustaches, for all the world, minus the helmet, like one of those old gentlemen you may see, about five o'clock on a fine afternoon in the season, toddling from the Athenæum to the Senior United. But this was not Sir Thomas de Boots, or Sir George Tufts. It was William I., *Rex Borussorum*. A very noble, honest, kind old man he looks, and such he is said, even by the opponents of his minister's policy, to be. Behind the age, some people say; but was not Colonel Thomas Newcome behind the age; wasn't Sir Robert Inglis; isn't more than one honest and simple and generous Tory nobleman in our favoured country behind the age? Sydney Smith used to say that he was no more ashamed of having been a Radical than of having had the chicken pox. There are some natures that can no more help being Conservative in their old age than they can help preferring port to claret.

A certain insolent arrogance on the part of the military class is slightly perceptible in Berlin; but it takes rather an amusing than an aggressive aspect. However strongly disposed the military may be to bully the civilian class, the strongest of garrisons, unless they are prepared to back up their insults by bombshells and grape-shot, cannot bully a city of five hundred thousand inhabitants. The Austrian officers in Milan used to try to bully the Italians; but assassination was found a sufficient corrective for rudeness; and prior to their expulsion the representatives of Francis Joseph had become quite affable. Even in Venice, where the dislike of the natives to the *Tedeschi* is carried to an almost incredible pitch, a kind of sulky truce has by common consent been established. The Austrians keep away from the *cafés* frequented by the Venetians, and the Venetians studiously return the compliment. When the Austrian military bands play in St. Mark's Place, the Italians quietly decamp; and as the Opera House used to be the great scene of contention between the two races, the authorities have very sensibly closed the Opera House altogether.

In Berlin the case is not precisely similar. The military hierarchy are, after all, of the same blood as the *pékins;* and the people themselves are intensely military in their tastes and habits. Moreover, Berlin is mostly garrisoned by regiments of the Guards, and the officers are, as a rule, not only gentle, but noble, comprising many scions of independent princely German houses,

who have taken service under the Black Eagle. Gentlemen, in all countries, usually behave themselves "as such"—again, you see, the commonalty monopolizes terseness of expression. The military magnificoes in Berlin, therefore, do not jostle the civilian when they meet into the gutter, or tread on his toes, or burn his nose with the tips of their cigars, or throw the contents of his coffee-cup in his face, or take away the newspaper he is reading, or threaten, if he remonstrates, to cut off his ears with their long swords. By the way, the officers of Napoleon's Guard used—if the "Hermit of the Chaussée d'Antin" is to be believed—to commit outrages almost as flagrant as these on the *pékins* in the Paris coffee-houses about the year 1810.

The Prussian military "swell" leaves the "cad" alone; but he is content to assert his position by the assumption of the drollest coxcombical airs you ever saw out of the comedy of *Money*, or an engraving of the fashions. Next to a dog with two tails, I do not know a more haughty-looking creature than the Prussian guardsman. He has a beautiful gravel-walk down the middle of his head, and hirsute appendages of the true Dundreary pattern—Sam's whiskers, however, which are auburn, not my Lord's. His noble trunk, when he wears a great coat, resembles in outline an equilateral triangle; for his waist is that of a wasp, whereas his collar bones are produced to a surprising extent on either side by the large, flat scale epaulettes he wears beneath his paletot. He is always in uni-

form. He always wears spurs. Without an eye-glass —a double eye-glass preferably—he is nothing. He takes his big sabre with him to the opera. He minces, he skips, he ogles, he "fancies himself"—monopoly of terseness by the vulgar again—*il fait sa casquette*, as the French say. His gloves and boots are faultless. You can see that he uses toilette vinegar and patronizes Jean Marie Farina, Fourth King of Cologne. He is a grand, beautiful, and imposing creature—a colossus of dandyism; and we, petty mortals, are glad to be allowed to creep under his huge legs. By-the-bye, I don't think the system of nursing in Prussia can be quite perfect, for the guardsman's legs are occasionally bandy, and knock-knees are not infrequent. Would he fight, this inspissated essence of exquisitism? I dare say he would, if he only had a chance. Julius Cæsar scratched his head with one finger, but he did some very notable handiwork in Gaul for all that; and Maurice, Comte de Saxe, could tear himself from silken dalliance in the boudoir of Adrienne Lecouvreur to give us "fits" at Fontenoy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPERA AT BERLIN — "L'AFRICAINE" AND "LE DOMINO NOIR"—LADIES' TOILETTES AT CONTINENTAL AND ENGLISH THEATRES.

I HAD been given to understand that Berlin was a very cold capital—the coldest, indeed, in Europe, next to the hyperborean ones—Copenhagen, Stockholm, and St. Petersburg; but so far as my experience extended, an unpleasant mildness was the prevailing characteristic of the Prussian New Year. And, could it be believed, at this season, too, discussions on Prussian politics partook of the mildness of things in general; the belligerents of Liberalism and Feudalism, snugly ensconced in winter-quarters, having agreed upon a temporary New Year's armistice. Conversation at Berlin, indeed, turned chiefly upon such mild topics as Chrismas trees, Christmas balls and parties, *bonbons*, New Year's gifts, and Paris millinery.

There was an agitation and a furore in Berlin, it is true; but it was all about the performance of *L'Africaine* at the Opernhaus, and the triumphs of Herr Wachtel and Fräulein Pauline Lucca therein. There was a talk of raising the roof of the sumptuous lyric temple in

the Linden to afford additional elbow-room for the favourite tenor's high notes; and the prima donna's sweet voice and saucy face were driving the most phlegmatic people in Germany half crazy with delight. Grave professors, whose usual studies tend more to the scraping of palimpsests and the deciphering of Egyptian funerary rolls than to operatic criticism, were absolutely writing poems about Pauline Lucca in the minor newspapers. The young lady has beauty, and looks as though she were perfectly aware of *that* fact; and, in her Africo-Indian costume—which, in common with the pattern of a Turkey carpet, is very pretty, but like nothing on the earth, or in the waters under the earth—she would make an admirable sign of "La Belle Sauvage." The photographers, of course, have seized upon and cut her up piecemeal. Full-face, three-quarter, and profile; whole length, half length, bust and vignette head; under every possible aspect of *pose* has Mdlle. Lucca been depicted on sensitive paper, and gummed upon Bristol board. *L'Africaine,* indeed, although a most colossal work, has some claims to be called an *Opera di Camera,* for its personages have been done to death by the photographers. The reader will pardon the mildness of this joke, and attribute it, if it so please him, to the weather. The latest device of the operatic operators has been to publish stereoscopic views of the entire decorations and *mise-en-scène* of *L'Africaine,* as produced at the Grand Opera, thus enabling provincial and foreign managers to get it up

"regardless of expense," and in close imitation of the Rue Lepelletier prototype, without the trouble of a journey to Paris. The Berlinois, of course, declare that their *Africaine* beats the French one by ever so many lengths, and that only a Berlin orchestra can thoroughly appreciate and interpret the genius of Meyerbeer. On the night when *L'Africaine* is performed, the Opernhaus is crammed to suffocation by the most aristocratic society of Berlin; but in deference to the less æsthetic tastes of the general public, the administration refrain from exhibiting the woes of Selika and the perfidy of Vasco de Gama more than once a week. Poor Vasco de Gama! Was ever a respectable circumnavigator's character so wantonly taken away as by Monsieur Scribe, in this most monstrous of librettos? We may next expect to see Sebastian Cabot figuring in the Divorce Court; or Christopher Columbus running away, and leaving his wife and children chargeable to the parish. Nay, there is no knowing where the recklessness of these librettists may stop. Squint-eyed malice may assail even the sainted memory of Captain Cook.

To one, like myself, who knows nothing of music, and to whom four hours of squalling and thrumming—even if they be of the most magnificent vocalization and instrumentation in the world—are rather a bore than otherwise, the story, disposition, and artistic mounting of this big opera are a never-failing source of speculation and amusement. Does not the libretto of *L'Afri-*

caine—who is a Hindoo—bear out the position often insisted upon, that the Frenchman knows nothing of any country beyond his own, and that, away from Paris, all foreign lands to him are *là bas?* There was Eugène Scribe, the most famous dramatist of his age and a member of the French Academy, weaving fable more preposterous, and putting it into a garb more incongruous, than an early German painter who drew the Prodigal Son in velvet doublet and silk hose, revelling in venison pasty and quaffing Rhine wine out of Bohemian goblets, would have ventured upon. I don't attach any weight to the reports that the plot of *L'Africaine* is not original—that it is borrowed half from the *Law of Java*, and half from the pantomime of *Billy Taylor and the King of Raritongo*. I only dwell upon the superlatively self-complacent and imprudent ignorance of the Frenchman who has mixed up Brahma and Mumbo-jumbo, the coast of Guinea and the Bengal Presidency, bayadères and Choctaw Indians, Moonshees and South Sea Islanders, in one astounding hotchpotch of absurdity, and who has dared to treat the grand historical character of Vasco de Gama as scurvily as though he were Pierrot or Scapin at the Funambules.

I marvel at the coolness with which we are bidden to admire, as a kind of epic poem, this trash produced in the plenitude of the fame, and the evening of the life, of the author of many excellent comedies. I admire those bishops in the council scene—bishops in beards and parti-coloured robes, who no more resemble

prelates of the Roman Catholic Church than Brother Ignatius resembles a Benedictine monk. I admire that assumed dungeon in the Inquisition, where Vasco de Gama is allowed to pin a map against the wall, and to have slaves to wait upon him. Old Inquisition! it was time that you, too, were libelled—you, who gave your captives neither daylight nor candlelight, books nor maps, nor pens nor ink—and whose only prison attendants were gaolers and sworn tormentors. And specially do I admire that ship, that most grotesque galley, the building and the pulling to pieces of which distracted the minds of so many machinists for so many months; the ship which turns her head to the north while her midships remain immovable; the ship which is top-heavy, and threatens to go down like the Royal George, "with all her crew complete," deflecting on one side, but disdaining complementary motion, and forgetting to roll over on the other; the ship which is not like a ship, but like the Tour de Nesle, like the Elephant and Castle, like the Grand Staircase at the Louvre, like anything you please to mention except a sea-going vessel. And, after seeing such an absurdity, to think of the modest little shallop in which Vasco de Gama and his heroic companions *did* go to sea! To think that the mightier Columbus, in his most famous voyage of discovery, commanded a craft no bigger than the lugger in which the Brighton fisherman goes out trawling! I delight in this ship of *L'Africaine*—this castellated ark, this highly ornamented washing tub,

with the patent and notorious land-lubbers spinning up and down the shrouds, and the poop, and the balconies, and the cannon, and the cuddy, where ever so many young women, in divers coloured raiment, sit at needle-work by the light of a moderator lamp, and sing plaintive ditties. In old time it used to be said that the French built ships for the English sailors to take—now-a-days they build them for us to laugh at. It is astonishing how stupidly slow in the mechanical appliances which aid scenic decoration are that people who claim to be the most theatrical of any in Europe. This ship in *L'Africaine*, which has been so much puffed and lauded, is but a servile and withal a clumsy copy of the ship in *Monte Christo*—an interminable melodrama produced at the Théâtre Historique in Paris nearly twenty years ago, and which transplanted, ship and all, to England, was signally hissed off the stage of Drury Lane Theatre shortly after February, '48. Not a step in scenic construction seems to have been made by the French since that period. Thank Heaven, Britannia still rules the waves—on the stage and elsewhere—and the admirers of the African ship should remember those glorious barks which Grieve built for Charles Kemble at Covent Garden in *The Tempest*, and which Beverley constructed for Madame Vestris at the Lyceum in *The Chain of Events*. Those were real ships. They had an odour of pitch and tar about them; and a certain proportion of the "supers" on board were always sea-sick.

L'Africaine just now seems to be everywhere. Never was there such an ubiquitous personage as that brick-dust coloured young woman. Precisely eight months have elapsed since, dexterously dodging the first representation of *L'Africaine* in Paris, I proceeded to certain cities on the Northern coast of the African continent. I came back from Africa in the summer, and found the *Africaine* in Bow Street, Covent Garden. I just missed her in the Place de la Monnaie, Brussels, but I found her blooming like Queen Dido—who, you may not have heard, was a rich Vandyke brown in hue—at Antwerp. She had not got to the African stage at the Hague. The Dutch are a slow-going people, and the dark lady need not be expected in Holland before 1870. But they are playing *L'Africaine* at Hesse-Darmstadt, were talking about her at Frankfort, are talking about nothing else at Berlin. Now, where is this to end? Scipio Africanus was a good man, but he would have wearied at last of Selika. Am I to find the dusky Queen of African-India at Leipsic, Dresden, Munich, Prague, Samarcand, Shanghae, Ballarat, Singapore, Rio Janeiro, Hakodadi, Tobolsk, Bognor in Sussex, the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the Orkney Islands, all of which places, I need scarcely observe, are set down for visit in my way-bill?

There is, of course, an opposition prima donna, and a party who hold *L'Africaine*, although very grand and scientific, to be a dull and fatiguing spectacle—to see which may be a duty, but is certainly not a plea-

sure—and who flock to the Opernhaus on the nights when pieces from the stock *répertoire* are in the bills, such as *Dinorah, Masaniello, Der Freischütz, Orpheus and Eurydice,* and, for lighter entertainment, *Martha* and the *Domino Noir.* In the last-named and most charming little opera, the rival cantatrice, Mademoiselle d'Edelsburg, who is a little taller than the Lucca, and is declared by many to be quite as good-looking, has made an undeniable sensation; and the Edelsburgian photographs shoulder the Luccan *cartes* on the Linden. In the last century, opera singers used to keep led-captains in their pay, who frequented the coffee-houses, twisted their moustaches, swore their employers were incomparable, and defied those who dared denial to the duello. A singer who had had one or two young men of noble family killed for her sake was sure to draw. There is no such employment for Saltabadil and Sparafacile now. It is with the more peaceful weapons of photography that the prima donnas wage war. I have generally observed that it is the artiste who can play a part with legs in it who generally wins; but the opportunity is rare for prima donnas, the contraltos usually claiming a monopoly in tights. Even Oscar, in the *Ballo in Maschera,* cannot get beyond knickerbockers and boots. They should set *Cymbeline* to music, or give us an operatic *Dorothea.*

This *Domino Noir* is pictorially, and as *Der Schwarzer Domino,* a queer performance. Than the music, nothing I think can be prettier; but the sparkling French dia-

logue has been solidified into the deadliest-lively German. Imagine an *omelette soufflée* transformed into suet pudding. You remember the group of gentlemen of the chorus who are at the ball, and come to supper, and in the last scene penetrate into the convent parlour. German actors are very conscientious as to the artistic proprieties, and the chorus singers in the *Domino Noir* had laboriously made themselves up in the similitude of officers in uniform, dandies in court dress, diplomatists highly decorated, and so forth. But you know the kind of white gloves which chorus singers *will* wear —the gloves that always seem to have too many fingers. You know their boots: they are usually family men, and are not above having bunions. Some of their number, to increase the realism of the thing, wore wigs with bald scalps, and spectacles. Under ordinary circumstances the scenic illusions would have been complete; only at Berlin, city *par excellence* of solemn etiquette, it is customary for all gentlemen having a right to wear a uniform to attend the opera *in* uniform. It was the drollest thing in the world when, after scanning the sham guardsmen, diplomatists, and chamberlains on the stage clattering their knives and forks on their meatless plates, and clinking their empty champagne glasses, you turned to the auditorium, and saw blazing in gold lace and parti-coloured ribbons the *real thing*. For there, in side boxes and dress circle, were the diplomatists, bald-headed and spectacled, starred and riboned, and hung thick as dyers' poles with the Golden

Fleece, and the Black Eagle, and the White Bear, and the Pig and Whistle. There were the Guardsmen, whiskered, mustachiod, padded, epauletted, and sabred. There were the chamberlains, and the equerries, and the aides-de-camp of the real court world.

I noticed, however, one vanity of official costume which the gentlemen of the chorus had not presumed to copy. The civilian courtiers at Berlin wear, in addition to the black pantaloons and waistcoat and white cravat of ordinary evening dress, most wonderful swallow-tailed coats, in hue cerulean, with large, flat, gilt buttons, and collars and cuffs of bright scarlet. The embroidered coats are reserved for state occasions. Were it not for some dim inkling of having once seen an English gentleman in the undress Windsor uniform, I should liken these swallow-tailed magnificoes to the now defunct race of twopenny postmen. But fancy any one going to Covent Garden on a subscription night in this panoply. What a shout there would be of "Eight o'clock delivery!" what "double knocks at the postman's conscience" there would be in the shape of chaff! Mem.: one of the strongest symptoms of a people's being in the full enjoyment of political liberty is when they indulge in chaff. I don't mean the *engueulement* of the Bal de l'Opéra, which is simply obscenity tempered by extortion, but the chaff of the Derby Day and the Oxford undergraduates' gallery at Commemoration.

I wonder what the real grandees in the boxes thought

of the poor singing men beyond the foot-lights, bedizened to strut and fret an hour or two in their likeness. I wonder how they felt with a constellation of spangles on their breasts, and glorified dog-collars round their necks. Did you ever dream that you had been made a Knight of the Garter, and that it hurt you?—that the sacred ligature was always falling off or was too tight? It is good to see ourselves sometimes, not "as others see us," but as others imitate and travesty our ways and aspect. For a painter who is a copyist of another master, I can suggest no better cure than the sight of the works of some other painter who copies him. There is much to be learnt from the Chinese and Japanese caricature of the "red-headed barbarians." There is more to be learned from the monkey-house at the Zoological. And I shall never forget going once to an Ethiopian Serenader entertainment, at a music-hall in Washington, where five white men, sitting on chairs, had, as usual, blackened their faces, enlarged their shirt collars, and were doing the usual business with the banjo and the bones. This music-hall happened to be one in which there was a gallery specially set aside for "coloured folks." It was grandly edifying to look up at that gallery, and see there, too, the real thing—woolly-headed, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, white-toothed, dingy-skinned—keenly criticising the spurious Ethiops on the stage. They watched each gesture, they listened to each inflection of dialect, with cunning eyes and sharp comment. "Bress my 'art, Mose, dat not a

mossle like um. *He* ack a kullered man! Carnt do it, sa—not by a jugfull. Ah, now, dat's beffer! dat's bully! dat's sumfin like!" and so on, *da capo*.

In the German edition of the *Domino Noir*—and in the French one, too, I think, there is an Englishman outrageously caricatured, according to continental notions, which are mainly gathered from the celebrated *Anglais à Mabille* lithograph of M. Gustave Doré, the little terra cotta statuettes of Paterfamilias with his wife and daughters on the boulevards, and the *feuilletons* of M. Alfred Assolant. The Berlin Englishman spoke very bad German; so bad, indeed, that I could almost understand what he said. His hair was parted down the middle; he had whiskers and moustaches of the colour and texture of light floss silk, and an eyeglass. He wore a scarlet tail-coat—just as though he were going to ride to hounds—buttoned across his manly chest, which was invested with a white waistcoat. Add to this white kerseymere pantaloons, tight to the calf, and buttoning to the ankle, striped silk stockings, pumps, and a cocked hat. This was the notion of a Briton in ball dress, as evolved by a Prussian from the depths of his moral consciousness. The distance between London and Berlin can, I believe, be traversed in about six-and-thirty hours; but international education is a plant of very slow growth.

All that I have said does not militate against the fact that the Berlin Opera House presents, almost every night during the week, a very noble and brilliant spectacle. I know no handsomer theatre in Europe, nor

one whose audience can make a braver show. The building itself outwardly is of great splendour, and were its site a little more elevated, it might remind one of St. George's Hall, Liverpool. The great asperity of the climate in winter—the average winter I mean, not the actual one—has unfortunately damaged, and most seriously so, the surface of the outer walls. Our English theatres, with the single exception of Mr. Barry's noble structure in Bow Street, wear an outward garb so mean and shabby, that by an Englishman the sumptuous architectural monument under the Linden must be looked at with a blush. Is it that we are ashamed of the drama, and think it a thing that should be done in a corner, that we build our theatres at the bottom of blind alleys? The Berlin Opera House, which was rebuilt after a fire in 1845, stands between two Royal palaces, and over against the University: and it has no need to be ashamed of any of its neighbours. So with the Schauspiel Haus, which may be called the Old Drury of Berlin. It is a capital work by Schinkel, with a façade rich in mythological sculpture by Rauch and Trieb; and it is on the Gendarmes Platz, between two churches. In the Saal, or supplementary theatre attached to the Schauspiel Haus, there is a permanent French company, and a very good one too. They are playing the *Demi-monde* this New Year's time. Where, out of Paris, are they not playing the *Demi-monde*, unless, indeed, they give the *Dame aux Camélias* by way of a change?

The Schauspiel Haus is considered quite as aristocratic as the opera, and royalty often patronizes the subscription balls given there; but, notwithstanding the intimation in the guide books that it is a "great treat to hear a Greek play such as the *Antigone* of Sophocles" performed at the theatre on the Gendarmes Platz, the staple of entertainment there does not go beyond heavy German plays and heavier translations of French and English dramas; and the tide of strangers naturally sets in towards the Opernhaus. The normal price of admission to the pit—which is all stalls, most luxuriously fitted up, and to which, with perfect propriety and great comfort, ladies can go—is moderate, a thaler and some groschen, I think; but the box-office arrangements are simply infamous. The *bureau de location* is only open for a short time, and at a most inconvenient period of the afternoon, just before the *tables d'hôte* begin; and the disposable tickets rapidly pass into the hands of all kinds of touts and speculators, who, according to the attractiveness of the evening's programme, charge fancy prices for them. The porters at the hotels are habitual dealers in opera tickets, and, worn out by their importunities, or not caring to *faire queue* just about dinner-time at the box-office, the traveller often takes the seats they have on hand, and directs them to be charged in his bill. I should strenuously advise all strangers, however, either to pay for their tickets on delivery, or to ascertain from the porter how much they are to cost on that particular

evening. I had to pay no more than a dollar and a half for an excellent stall to see the *Trovatore;* but I was actually charged five thalers for a back seat in a back box on the last night of the representation of the *Africaine.* The colossus of operas is certainly four hours long, but I don't hold it worth fifteen shillings in Berlin.

Thus, you see that you may pay too dear for your whistle; but if Benjamin Franklin had not been made to pay too dear for *his,* the world would have lost an essay full of sound and practical common-sense; whereas, had I not been bubbled out of thirty-shillings —for my billet was *en partie double*—for two small shelves at the back of a *baignoire,* I should not be in a position to proffer all intending tourists a piece of advice which, I hope, may not be altogether useless to them. If it would only conduct its box-office business —why is it that rascality and box-keeping always seem to go hand-in-hand?—on the fair and equitable principles adopted in Brussels, and especially in Munich, in which last city the administration of the theatres is a pattern of excellence, there would be ground for nothing but praise in the Berlin Opernhaus. A lady may go in her bonnet and shawl to any part of the house; but there is, on the other hand, no law to prevent her appearing in full ball-dress, and with as liberal a display of shoulders and head-gear as she pleases. If she have a handsome shawl or mantle, she can retain it; if she have an opera-cloak, she may drop it and exhibit all her *dentelles* and all her diamonds. In short, you are in the blessed condition of doing as you like as to attire.

When they do remove their bonnets, however, the German ladies are seen to be tremendous in back hair, front cascades, side bulbs, transverse roly-polies, combs like the ornamented parts of brass fenders, and "round tires like the moon." They are, indeed, most elaborately "fixed;" and not only in full dress, but in walking garb, they remind the observer very closely of the ladies of a city which is, indeed, in point of population, the fourth German city in the world, and which is becoming more and more Teutonic every day—I mean New York. In the New York Academy of Music—than which there are few, if any, theatres more tasteful and elegant—bonnets in the boxes and bonnets in the stalls are likewise tolerated, although, for mere extravagance sake, the ladies often wear a special kind of white *chapeau* called the "opera bonnet." In all the great continental cities a similar, or nearly a similar, degree of liberty as to dress exists. How is it, why is it, that in England we are still the slaves of an absurd custom which compels ladies to uncover their heads, not only at the opera, but in the stalls and dress-circles of second-rate theatres? Why should a lady's bonnet which has cost ever so much money, and has been wrung like so many blood-drops from the purse of Benedict, be exposed for four or five hours to the prying inspection of the lean and hungry female who takes care of the cloaks, and who often wantonly squashes flowers of price, and ties velvet ribbons into black knots, and wrenches at last the bonnet from its peg, half spoilt? Come to the theatre with-

out your bonnet, you reply. Yes; but does everybody keep a brougham, and are four-wheeled cabs always to be obtained on wet nights? "Dressing for the theatre" is one of the many madnesses of the English people. Time, money, temper are alike swallowed up in that vortex, and the result is wretched.

In a continental theatre the variety of costumes, the contrast of colour, the play of light and shade, in the auditory, delight the eye and raise the spirits. But look down from the topmost tier of an English house upon pit, stalls, and dress circle, and you gaze on a cheerless waste—men in funereal black, ladies in a twenty-two shilling opera cloak, white or red, and three-and-sixpenny wreaths. And I hold a wreath, unless it be made in the Chaussée d'Antin, and worth five guineas, to be what Bishop Hall called self-commendation, "an abominable thing." However, we assume that in things theatrical, as in all others, we are perfection. Podsnap, who represents in English society that which Benoiton does in French, is scandalized at foreigners who make no more fuss about going to the play than about eating their lunch. But oh! the dreary, petty miseries and meannesses that are hidden under those red and white opera cloaks —miseries and meannesses that Podsnap does not dream of. The cleaned gloves, with the sewn-up thumbs; the fierce heartburnings because Mrs. A.'s bracelet is genuine, and Mrs. B.'s is only Lowther Arcade; the bitter criticisms on the difference

of colour between the front hair and the back hair of Miss C.; the mental wagers that Mrs. D.'s lace shawl isn't paid for; the squabbles about cab fares; the ravings and moanings because Benedict, after a hard day's work, doesn't care about putting himself in a black broadcloth pillory, and being mewed up in a hot theatre from eight o'clock to midnight; the pinchings and starvings to pay for tickets—mortgaging a week of decent dinners for a night of sham display; and, worse than all, the pitiful cadging and caballing for "orders." But we are perfection, and Podsnap is great.

Would you believe it, these unenlightened Germans absolutely go to the play at half-past six in the evening! From the *table d'hôte* to the Opernhaus there is but one step. "*Anfang halb* 7; *Ende nach* 9;" that is the almost invariable announcement in the programme. *L'Africaine* being altogether an abnormal production, the audience were rung in at six o'clock, and rung out at half-past ten. But as a rule you may order your carriage, or your umbrella, or your great coat for a quarter-past nine; and when the play is comfortably over, you have your tea and begin the evening. The *cafés* are thronged for hours after the theatres are closed. This sort of thing would hardly do at home. We are a late people, and are growing later every day. We dine at seven or eight o'clock, and hastily bolting our food rush off to the theatre. Theatrical performances, again, in England are much too long. In Berlin the fashionable dinner hour is four P.M.; and

the most protracted repast, although they do spin out the *tables d'hôte* to a somewhat aggravated length, must come to an end in an hour and a half. You are "through" by five-thirty. You have plenty of time to take your coffee and smoke, and the ladies have plenty of time to put on their bonnets.

It is delightful, though rather slow. The places of amusement are always crowded. People seem to attend the theatre with as much regularity as the inhabitants of a small English country town attend church. It is quite a family party. You recognise your next neighbours of the *table d'hôte*. You know all the officers in the Royal Guard by sight, for they are always at the opera or on the Linden. It is reported that they only pay ninepence for admission to the Royal theatres; and I will wager that the major part of the civilian audience do not habitually disburse five thalers a-piece for their seats, even on *Africaine* nights. Besides the Opernhaus, the Schauspiel, and the Saal, there are at least half a dozen more theatres in Berlin — the Victoria, the Variétés, the Königstadt, the Friedrich Wilhelm; to say nothing of a big circus, the Winter Gardens, the Sing Academie, the Coliseum, and innumerable balls and concerts. And they are all crammed night after night. This is pretty well for a city whose population is about on a par with that of Glasgow. Would that last-named flourishing city be much the worse for a few more places of recreation—say to counterbalance the whisky shops—I wonder?

SPAIN.

CHAPTER I.

FROM BERLIN TO MADRID—THE IBERIAN CUSTOM-HOUSE —STONY WASTES OF NORTHERN SPAIN — SPANISH PEASANTS.

A LITTLE fat Frenchman, with a *débonnaire* mien and a curiously-worked Berlin wool travelling-bag, not much bigger than a lady's reticule, at Irun, where I took the liberty of crossing the River Bidassoa and the Spanish frontier, was in an awful rage at what he deemed the despotic and indelicate conduct of the custom-house officers of her Catholic Majesty. "I have been insulted, outraged, trampled upon," he cried; "and why? Because I am fat. You yourself," he continued, glancing, not without approval, in my direction, "are somewhat fleshy. You are built in a manner of the most solid. You are broad; you carry many vestments. Tell me, my friend"—I had known him five minutes—"have you too been visited beneath the chemise of flannel?" I was happy to be enabled to reply that, my baggage being registered to Madrid, I had not experienced the slightest fiscal inconvenience, and that the officer of the *Duanas Españolas* who had attended to me, so far from overhauling the recesses of

my rugs and bags, or subjecting me to the indignity of a personal search, had behaved with a degree of courtesy worthy of the bluest blood of Old Castile, and dignifying me with the honorary title of *Caballero*, had informed me that five and forty minutes were at my disposal wherein to dine and study the configuration of the territory about Irun.

This only increased the rage of the little fat Frenchman. His fury was quite fuliginous. "It is then because I am French," he exclaimed. "They insult my nation. It was for this that we abolished the Inquisition, and declared there were no more Pyrenees. I have been examined like the last malefactor of the *bagne*. My little album of photographs has been torn asunder. More than that, I have been dragged into a retired place, and searched—yes, searched, my dear—as though I were a pickpocket or a——" The little Frenchman did not complete his phrase. I ventured mentally to fill up the blank with the word "smuggler." "Did they expect," he resumed, "to find five-and-forty yards of ribbon beneath my chemise, or a chest of cigars in my bag?" The little fat Frenchman was evidently aware of the description of merchandize ordinarily conveyed in a surreptitious manner across the frontier. "Ladies," he continued, "are subjected to the same degrading formalities. If stout they are doomed to torture. Embonpoint is a crime. Happy the skeletons! Sacrilegious hands invade their crinolines. It is an infamy. And they call this civilization, progress. But

the press, happily, in Spain, has some fragments of liberty. I will protest, in the columns of the *Epoca*, against these enormities."

I learnt, subsequently, from the little Frenchman, that this was by no means his first visit to Spain, and that he had been familiar with the country since the year 1838—time enough, one would think, for him to have learnt the rules and regulations of the Iberian custom-house. From all which circumstances and from rather suspicious signs of recognition passing between the corpulent complainant and the railway *employés*, I was malicious enough to infer that the little man was not wholly innocent of contraband practices; but that this time, being only in ballast, he was virtuously indignant at being taken for a smuggler and "visited beneath the chemise of flannel." Few things can approach the noble ire of the naughty when they are accused of offences they happen not to have committed.

There is much smuggling over this frontier; but it has become as tame and prosaic a process as the tobacco and schiedam ventures of the stewardesses of the Rotterdam steamers. The romantic *contrabandistas*, with their pack-mules of prohibited goods, their *trabucos* and their striped blankets—whose combats with gendarmes in the gorges of the Pyrenees Mr. Stanfield was wont to paint in a manner so dramatic—have given place to illicit commercial travellers in broadcloth and round hats, who, being not unfrequently of the gentler

sex, quietly take second-class tickets for Madrid at the Orleans Railway Terminus in Paris, and make their return journeys with ease and despatch. An additional reason, I think, for abrogating those obsolete custom-house absurdities which I have already denounced. There must be ten times more smuggling with the aid of railways than in the old *trabuco* and pack-mule days, and although a notorious contrabandist may be occasionally singled out, and "visited beneath the chemise of flannel," it must be a physical impossibility for any force of *empleados de duanas* short of an entire brigade, horse, foot, and dragoons, to search all the passengers in an express train personally. Much better to have free trade, and give their custom-house worthies the chance of earning an honest living elsewhere. Laws against smuggling, and smuggling itself, have become anachronous. A "riding officer" in England is as out of place as would be Don Quixote running tilt against a steam flour-mill at Battersea. Dirk Hatterick in a petticoat and bucket boots and a belt full of pistols is admirable—with a good bass voice—on the stage; but in real life he is a nuisance.

Had the custom-house people, however, put me *in cuerpo*, and searched me down to my second layer of muscles for goods liable to duty, I was resolved to refrain from complaint. If you go to Spain to grumble you might just as well, and better, stay at home. Half the savage spiteful books that have been written about the United States of America have owed their primary

inspiration to the irritation caused by the systematic brutality and insolence of the custom-house officers in Boston and New York. His plumage ruffled and his temper soured, the traveller has rushed to his hotel to pen for the outgoing mail philippics against Columbia and Democracy. As Spain is one of the most interesting countries in Europe, it is therefore expedient to avoid at the outset such an element of discomfort. That you should keep your temper is one of the first conditions of existence in the Peninsula. The people, high and low, are systematically courteous, considerate, and obliging; *but they will not be hurried.* They have their own way of doing things; and in that way they do them, and will continue to persist, I suppose, as they have persisted for I know not how many hundreds of years.

It is rather a long run from Paris to Madrid—some nine hundred miles, I apprehend—which is accomplished, with ample time for refreshment at Tours, Bordeaux, Morcheux, Irun, and Miranda, in some thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. Twenty years since, the journey, travelling post, might have been got through in about seven days. It is a longer run to journey, as was my fate, from Berlin to Madrid, say five hundred more; but with that "wonderful thing steam, sir," travelling has lost nine-tenths of its tedium and its terrors. Nay, as a telegraph is half a railway, and Mr. Mitchie has successfully followed the telegraphic route from Pekin to St. Petersburg, we may hope ere long for a grand Anglo-

Russo-Chinese Junction Railroad; steam-ferry across the Channel or tunnel under it, rail through to Paris, and direct through Berlin, Königsberg, Petersburg, Nijni-Novgorod, Kazan, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen, Tomsk —with a branch to the Siberian mines—Kiakhta, the Desert of Gobi Kalgan—a buffet at the Great Wall—and so to the capital of the Flowery Land. There are some difficult bits of engineering in the passages of the Kingan Mountains; but what are they to those wonderful corkscrew arrangements in Styria?

The Great Northern of Spain Rail is, in its way, quite as great a wonder. Indeed, Napoleon's vaunt has been verified, but not in the sense intended by the arrogant conqueror. The railway has just done away with the Pyrenees; left them on one side; gone over them; tunnelled through them when necessary; skirted them; pierced their spurs, turned their flanks, generally dispensed with them altogether, and left them very much out in the cold. As the train rushes from Bayonne to Biarritz and San Juan de Luz, where you catch a glimpse of the Bay of Biscay, and before you reach Spain proper, you see the Pyrenees looming around you, huge crags shaking their blue fists, as it were, in the distance like baffled giants; but the Ferro Carril del Norte derides them as Ulysses derided Polyphemus, and rushes on with a screech of triumph. I could descry tall hilltops crowned with snow, which might be eternal; but in my immediate vicinity were the blazing locomotive, and the hot-water cases in the carriage.

Eternal snows! The pumps at the stations were very satisfactorily kept from freezing by means of haybands wrapped round them. Up in those rocky ranges yonder they say there are yet bears and cat-a-mountains; but what are the wild beasts to us, when we are due in Madrid at 10·40 A.M.?

At Biarritz the houses—all save the Villa Eugénie, which has a pert Parisian squareness and simper—have a Spanish look. At San Juan de Luz you may hear the Basque language jabbered on the platform. Don't run away with the notion that it is Spanish, and that Spanish is a harsh, dissonant tongue; for the Basque, they say, is purely original, and resembles no other dialect in the whole world. About six hours after leaving Bordeaux you are really and truly in Spain, and "full blast" on your way to Burgos, Valladolid, and Madrid. One's pulse is apt to beat somewhat quicker than usual when the names of these cities of fame are first legible on the railway time-table; but it grows dark long before you reach Valladolid and Burgos, and, as for Madrid, you will have time to examine the capital of Spain at your leisure.

The few hours of daylight that remain may be not unprofitably spent in a cursory survey of the country through which you pass. I confess that I was disappointed in my first view of Spain, but not disagreeably so. It was not in the least like the Spain I had read about, or seen painted in oil and water colours; but still it was totally unlike any other country I had ever

visited: it was novel and original and strange, and consequently delightful. Nothing to remind you of Italy, nothing to remind you of Cuba or Mexico even. Far as the eye could reach on either side, girdled in the infinite distance by mountains so shadowy that it was hard to tell when the clouds kissed their summits, which was mountain and which vapour, stretched a blue and brown land—blue in the middle distance, brown in the foreground—not a rich sienna, not a cold sepia, but a dusky, tawny, half-buffalo, half-leonine dun hue. Immense aridity, but no flatness; an undulating wilderness, a kind of brown sea, coagulated as it rolled; and stones everywhere, stones by hundreds, stones by thousands, stones by millions—stones of all shapes and sizes—round and jagged, square and conical, pebbles and giant boulders, now scattered singly, now sprawling pell mell, a petrified Tom Tiddler's Ground; now heaped in cairns as though in memory of some race of beings long since murdered there.

I never saw such a stony waste. For miles and miles no roads were visible, and no trees. The only vegetation was a little scrubby brushwood struggling up between the stones, or some rank grass cropping from the savage masses of rock like sparse hairs from the bald wrinkled head of a very old man. What tremendous eruptions those must have been to have scattered this innumerable detritus far and wide! At times there did seem some inkling of purpose and design in the arrangement of this rubbish of eternity. Here was

the sketch of Stonehenge; here the dim outline of a wall; here the shadowy *ébauche*, even, of a gable end of doors and windows like those sad, sad hovels in the South of Ireland from which the miserable peasants have been evicted and whose vestiges yet remain dumb, but eloquent against the misgovernment and rapacity of which we are even now reaping the bitter fruits. There was a high plateau, and stones spherical and oblong heaped together as though some antediluvian game at ninepins had been played here. Then, as the eye wandered over the uplands, dotted with myriads of stones, you fancied that countless flocks of sheep were grazing on those brown and blue downs.

Hill and valley, slope and bank; dried up watercourses; now and then a narrow little thread of a rivulet, with a bridge of one arch so crumbling and ruinous, that it might have been as primeval as the neighbouring boulders, and only some happy accident of Nature's engineer work; here and there some actual traces of man's presence and labour in the shape of a corral or sheepfold formed by a low circular wall, or a farmhouse, or a swineherd's hut, which was just so many stones piled up, seemingly with the very slightest addition of mortar to keep them fast, and crowned by those elliptical brown tiles, so truly distinctive of Spanish architecture, which rest, without cement, layer upon layer by their own gravity, and are only protected by a row of pins at the coping. But stones, stones, stones everywhere—the dragon's teeth of Nature; but where

is the warrior-magician to summon them into life? There came over one a strange longing to jump out of the carriage and disturb one of those stony heaps, and set the balls a rolling down a hill; moving that perhaps which time and tempest had passed by, and had not been moved an inch for five thousand years.

This is what I saw of the North of Spain. In the South, and on the coast, the aspect of the country is doubtless entirely different. Three parts of the road from Irun to Madrid are a desert—but not a howling one. I have seen the desert and found it dreadful; well-nigh intolerable to sight and spirit. The horrible monotony of Sand, for ever Sand; the frightful sameness of the Mexican plains, with their magueys and nopals, seemingly cast by the million in the same mould, absolutely sicken the traveller and ultimately reduce him to despair; but here the infinite undulations of the ground, the infinite variety of forms in this stony chaos, and the mellow, subdued tints of the landscape relieve and even recreate the eye. As, in passing through a half-burnt Canadian forest, you see trees that look like fighting gladiators, trees that are kicking up their heels, trees that have their arms akimbo, trees that seem to dance; so do the stones in Iberia Petræa assume all kinds of weird and fantastic shapes. There are rocks that are laughing, rocks that make faces at you; stones that are like Chinese tombolas; stones that seem to have their jaws tied up for toothache; stones that seem to be in agony. *Il y a Jean qui pleure*

et Jean qui rit. They distract your attention; you individualize, you give them biographies; you weave legends about them. They are, for all their jagged immobility, a history and a world.

And the people: for these shattered quarries have their inhabitants. There must be human conies burrowing in these holes and crevices. Round about the railway stations there are a few signs of life. Sparse homesteads, kitchen gardens of lilliputian dimensions, and hayricks no bigger than sentry boxes crop up. A tiny skein of country road between frowning masses of stone makes a timid show. Now a lumbering dray drawn by two oxen, yoked over the forefront, crawls along, a wild looking peasant sitting on the shaft. Now a string of pack-mules, laden, however, with legitimate merchandize, plod gravely by, not keeping strictly to the road, but straggling among the stones in hope of finding some scrap of pasture there, and coming back composedly to the beaten track.

A wonderful quadruped is your mule—"half hoss, half jackass," as Mr. Josh Billings observes; "they then kum to a full stop, Natur' hevin' diskivered her mistake. They weigh akordin' to heft more than any other creetur' 'ceptin' a crowbar. They ain't got no more morials than cats; and proud man seldom gives 'em a chance to be frisky. They ain't got no friends. They will live on huckleberry brush. They are like some men, very deceitful at hart, and they never had no disease that a good stick wouldn't cure. An

auctioneer told me this, and I never knew an auctioneer tell a lie unless he could get something by it." There is little, I think, to be added to the philosophy of Mr. Josh Billings.

The Spanish costume, as apparent on the platforms at the stations, is disappointing. The railway guards and porters you expect to look as railway guards and porters look everywhere; but the passengers have very little of the Spanish dancer's or bull-fighter's appearance. The women of the meaner sort tie up their heads with very ugly pañuelos or kerchiefs, not of bright colours, and the ladies are hatted, gaiter-booted, and crinolined in the latest Parisian style. Until I reached Madrid I did not see one mantilla. For fans, of course, it was not the season. The peasantry are as wild-looking as any amateur of the romantic could desire; but I was shocked to observe that they were addicted to wearing garments of corduroy and velveteen, and even plain woollen, and that they protected their lungs from the keenness of the morning and evening air more by the means of red comforters and *cache-nez* than by picturesquely draped blankets or the ends of mantles thrown artistically over the shoulder. Their head-dresses, however, are peculiar. In the Basque provinces is worn a large, flat, round berita, something like the bonnet of a Scotch shepherd. Indeed, so *coiffé*, the elderly Spaniard, who almost always wears whiskers and very rarely moustaches, has a not remote resemblance to Tam O'Shanter. Towards Madrid the

black pork-pie hat, with low conical crown, makes its appearance. Sashes of variegated hues I missed. Trousers and shoes of undressed leather, with wooden or osier soles, replaced those dapper velvet smalls and leathern gaiters with many tags you see in those delightful statuettes of *papier mâché* they make at Malaga. Yet, notwithstanding a few, a very few blankets, and a shovel-hatted priest or so, and an occasional beggar, whose looped and windowed raggedness Callot or Goya would have revelled in depicting, the costume of the northern Spanish peasant is calculated to dissipate many illusions. In one particular, however, he is characteristic. In his hand, or slung over his shoulder, he invariably carries either a gourd, or water-bottle, or a bundle. Without one of these compensating balances he would lose his centre of gravity, I think, and tumble over. That bag over the shoulder consoles you for many shortcomings. You think of the inexhaustible contents of Sancho Panza's wallet.

It was in the grey of the morning, when in the midst of this brown wilderness dotted with rocks, this cemetery full of the gravestones of a dead world—I saw, like unto some building dropped from the moon, a great mass of domes, and windows, and arches, and colonnades. What was it? A palace, a convent, a barrack, a prison? The train drew up at a very shabby station, and ten minutes' grace being allowed I entered the meanest and shabbiest little *café* I had ever seen out of Spanish America, where the only refreshment obtain-

able was a basin full of coffee and a lump of bread. The coffee was execrable, the bread delicious; the sugar so badly refined as to be ashy grey in hue. There was no butter to be had. There is no butter in Spain, save at the Queen's dairy at Aranjuez. "*Caballeros, al tren!*" rang out the sonorous voice of the guard. I asked the name of the station. The guard pointed to a big black board, on which the name was painted. It was the Escorial.

The which announcement, coupled with some seventy-five hours' almost incessant railway travelling, caused my thoughts to wander for a while in a kind of dream and ambient fog land. Was I really in Spain? Why, only a day or two since I was walking under the Linden, watching the Prussian grandees go by to the opening of the chambers in the white hall of the Schloss. Near the Brandenburg Gate I had the honour of being jostled by an amiable veteran officer of high rank—he must have been eighty years of age at least—who, in full uniform covered with orders, and with a great silver helmet on his good old head, was tottering up and down the Linden, shaking hands with everybody he met in rather an uncertain and senile manner. The Brandenburg Gate! In another hour I should be at the Puerta del Sol. Far away from the desert palace of the Escorial had the train borne us. The scene was wilder than ever. Our way was now by the brink of precipices, now hewn out of the living rock. Nature—a few wheeling crows, in a rage that there was so little carrion about, excepted—had it all to herself. It was

strange—it was well nigh bewildering, to turn from a picture which might have pourtrayed the eve of a deluge or the morrow of an earthquake, and look into the comfortable, padded carriage, with its lamps, its cushions, its rugs, and foot-warmers, its guide-books and novels and newspapers, and its well-wrapped inmates comfortably snoozing. The night before last they slept at the Louvre or the Grand hotels. To-night they will sleep at the Ambassador's or the Prince's. Their luggage is registered, their papers are *en règle*. What care they for this stony chaos or this abomination of desolation?

Madrid! It comes upon you almost as suddenly as Venice does from that causeway over the Lagunes: only, for the cupolas and campaniles of the City in the Sea substitute the hideous out-buildings of a railway terminus, workshops, engine-sheds, goods cars, and tall chimneys. The custom-house gave little trouble, although I may mention the extreme solicitude which the officer manifested to know the precise use and purpose of a pair of boots specially manufactured for the relief of the gouty, which, by a happy hazard, I had picked up in Paris. I can see that officer scrutinizing those boots now; peering into them as though he smelt a *pronunciamiento* in their toes. He did not seize them, and I tread the pavement of the Puerta del Sol without torture.

END OF VOL. I.

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